SELECTED WORKS OF

M.N. ROY

VOLUME IV · 1932–1936

Edited by Sibnarayan Ray

SHOUT
SHARE
IT

M.N. Roy was an outstanding intellectual-activist in the communist movement of the first half of this century, a colleague of Lenin, Stalin, Mao, and Trotsky. He founded the Communist Party of Mexico in 1919 and of India in 1920. He was also a member of the Executive and the Presidium of the Communist International, and his contribution as a theoretician of communist policy for underdeveloped nations is outstanding and widely acknowledged. Roy wrote extensively on India, the erstwhile Soviet Union, China, and Europe. The first three volumes of *Selected Works* cover his major writings of the period 1917–32.

In 1930 Roy broke with the Comintern and returned to India where he was arrested and sentenced to twelve years' rigorous imprisonment. The present volume covers the period 1932–6 and contains his prison writings. The selections in the volume fall into two parts. The first part comprises those of his prison writings that he managed to send out clandestinely to his followers. The second part consists of selections from his 3000-page jail manuscripts which range from the philosophy of science to history, sociology, religion, and culture. The latter bear witness to the transition of a revolutionary intellectual from communism to radical humanism.

SELECTED WORKS OF
M. N. ROY

Volume IV
1932–1936

SELECTED WORKS OF

M. N. ROY

Volume IV
1932–1936

Edited by
SIBNARAYAN RAY

DELHI
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
CALCUTTA CHENNAI MUMBAI
1997

Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford New York
Athens Auckland Bangkok Calcutta
Cape Town Chennai Dar es Salaam Delhi
Florence Hong Kong Istanbul Karachi
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City
Mumbai Nairobi Paris Singapore
Taipei Tokyo Toronto

and associates in

Berlin Ibadan

Centenary Edition of the Selected Works of M. N. Roy (1887–1954)
Selected and edited with an introduction and notes by Sibnarayan Ray
Volume IV (1932–36)

© *Introduction and notes: Sibnarayan Ray 1997*
© *Selected Works: Indian Renaissance Institute 1997*

ISBN 0 19 563768 2

Typeset by Excellent Laser Typesetters, Tri Nagar, Delhi 110035
Printed at Rekha Printers Pvt. Ltd.., New Delhi 110020
and published by Manzar Khan, Oxford University Press
YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi 110001

Contents

List of Illustrations vii
Acknowledgements xi
Introduction to Volume IV 1

SELECTED WORKS PART-I

Clandestine Publications of the Prison Years (1932–36)

China in Revolt (1932) 23
Our Task in India (1932) 89
Whither Congress? A Manifesto (1934) 149
A Letter to the Communist International (1935) 169
The Manifesto of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Party of the Indian Working Class (The Communist Party) (1935) 189
Letters to the Congress Socialist Party (1934, 1935, 1936) 269

SELECTED WORKS PART-II

Selections from the Prison Manuscripts (1931–36)

Selections from *Materialism: An Outline of the History of Scientific Thought* (from the Prison Manuscripts, Vols. I, II, III, 1931–33) 317
The Historical Role of Islam (from Vol. II, 1932) 359
Selections from *Heresies of the 20th Century* (from Vols. II, III, IX, 1932–34; 1936) 403
Selections from *Fascism: Its Philosophy, Professions and Practice* (from Vols. III, IV, V, 1933–34; 1935) 427
The Memoirs of a Cat (from Vol. V, 1934–35) 459
Selections from *India's Message* (from Vols. IV, VII, IX, 1934; 1935–36) 483

Selections from *Crime and Karma: Cats and Women*
(from Vols. V, VII, VIII, IX, 1934–35; 1936) 509
Selections from *The Ideal of Indian Womanhood*
(from Vol. IX, 1936) 539
Selections from *Science and Philosophy*
(from Vols. IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, 1934–36) 565
On Stepping Out of Jail (1936) 625
Index 637

List of Illustrations

PLATES
(Between pp. 324 and 325)

1. *M. N. Roy in Europe in November 1930 (a silhouette)*
   From: the late Ellen Roy's collection
2. *Prisons 1931–36*
   Top
   - District Jail, Kanpur

   Bottom
   - Central Prison, Bareilly District Jail
3. Top
   - District Jail, Almorah

   Bottom
   - *From:* Release Register, District Jail, Dehra Dun

   9.1.32 Weight at time of admission: 189 1b
   20.11.36 Weight at time of release: 145 1b
   Courtesy: Debabrata Surchowdhury
4. *The early 'Royists'*
   Top left
   - A. N. 'Pathan' Shetty, Bombay — *Courtesy:* Indumati Parikh

   Top right
   - C. Y. Chitnis, Bombay — " "

   Bottom left
   - Rajani Mukerji, Calcutta — *Courtesy:* Dwipen Banerjee

   Bottom right
   - Dharitri Ganguli, Calcutta — *Courtesy:* Biren Gupta
5. *Comrades and associates*
   Top left
   - A. K. Pillai, Madras

   Top right
   - Philip Spratt, Bangalore

Bottom left
  Jibanlal Chattopadhyay, Calcutta
Bottom right
  Ram Singh, Delhi
  From:Editor's personal collection

6. *Friends and Colleagues*
   Top left
     Laxman Shastri Joshi, Wai, Poona
   Top right
     S. H. Vatsyayan, 'Ajneya', Delhi
   Bottom left
     Sudhindra Nath Datta, Calcutta
   Bottom right
     Benoyendra Nath Banerji, Calcutta
     Courtesy: Indumati Parikh, Ila D. Koirala, Editor's personal collection, D. Surchowdhury
7. *From District Jail, Kanpur, 1931*
   Top
     Roy's letter dated 10 October 1931 to R. S. Ruikar, President, All India Trade Union Congress
   Bottom
     Roy's letter dated 10 October 1931 to S. Srinivas Iyenger, who presided over the Gauhati Session of the Indian National Congress (Dec. 1926) and organized the Independence League with himself as President and Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose as Secretaries.
     From: M. N. Roy Archives, Nehru Memorial Museum Library, New Delhi
8. *Two pages from the Prison Manuscripts*
     From: M. N. Roy Archives, Nehru Memorial Museum Library, New Delhi.
9. Top
     M. N. Roy & Ellen Roy as members of the Indian National Congress, 1937
   Bottom
     M. N. Roy & Ellen Roy at 13 Mohini Road, Dehra Dun, 1938
       From: the late Ellen Roy's collection
10. Top
     M. N. Roy and Ellen Roy at Bishnupur Conference, 1938
    Bottom
     M. N. Roy with his Colleagues in the League of Radical Congressmen, 1939–40

From L to R. Standing: Paramanand, Wagholikar, R. D. Nigam, V. M. Tarkunde, Rajani Mukherji, A. K. Mukherji
From L to R. Seated: Wamanrao Kulkarni, Jatin Mitra, K. K. Sinha, M. N. Roy, V. B. Karnik, Ellen Roy, M. R. Shetty
Courtesy: S. N. Nautiyal, Dehra Dun

11. Top
At the Radical Democratic Party Study Camp at Uttarpara, Hooghly, 1947
From L to R. Standing: Jagannath Bose, Baren Chattopadhyay, Gourangadev Chattopadhyay, K. K. Sinha, Sibnarayan Ray, Nalini Sen
From: L to R. Seated: M. N. Roy, Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyay, Ellen Roy, V. M. Tarkunde, Swadesh Ranjan Das
From: Editor's personal collection

Bottom
Indian Renaissance Institute Study Camp, Mussoorie, 1949
From L to R: S. N. Ray, V. M. Tarkunde, G. D. Parikh, G. R. Dalvi, M. N. Roy, Ellen Roy, S. H. Vatsyayan 'Ajnyeya'
Courtesy: S. N. Nautiyal

12. *Indian Renaissance Institute Study Camp, Mussoorie, 1949*
From L to R. Seated: G. R. Dalvi (6th), Jyotirmay Guha Thakurata (8th), Indu Tarkunde (9th), Chandmull (10th), Ellen Roy, M. N. Roy, S. N. Ray, V. M. Tarkunde ______ M. L. Sen, G. D. Parikh, S. N. Puri, Sushanto Das ______ A. K. Mukherji ______
From L to R. Standing: Suyash Malik, Keshav Malik ______ M. J. Sayeed ______ S. N. Nautiyal, R. L. Nigam, S. N. Munshi
Courtesy: S. N. Nautiyal

13. *Portrait of M. N. Roy, undated, probably 1938–39*
From: the late Ellen Roy's collection

14. Top
A rare photograph of M. N. Roy wearing Bengali clothes (undated, probably some time in the late forties)

Bottom
M. N. Roy with Tarkateerth Laxman Shastri Joshi, 1953
From: the late Ellen Roy's collection.

15. Top
M. N. Roy & Ellen Roy at 13 Mohini Road, Dehra Dun, 1952
Bottom
M. N. Roy & Ellen Roy at 13 Mohini Road, Dehra Dun, 1953
Courtesy: S. N. Nautiyal
16. *Photograph of Roy taken after his recovery from the first attack, 1953*
(black and white copy made from a faded colour transparency)
Courtesy: S. N. Nautiyal

Acknowledgments

In the first three Volumes of the *Selected Works of M. N. Roy*, I have acknowledged my debt to the many individuals and institutions but for whose help, counsel, and service, this difficult undertaking would have been altogether beyond my ability and resources. For this present volume I wish to place on record my deep sense of gratitude particularly to those who have helped in one way or another in my studies and researches of the period 1932–6. Among institutions I am particularly indebted to:

Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi (which houses the M. N. Roy Archives); National Archives, New Delhi; Arbeiderbevaegelsens Bibliotek Og Arkiv, Copenhagen; Bibliotheque National, Paris; Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford; Baillieu Library at University of Melbourne (where, at my instance, a fairly large microfilm collection of material relating to M. N. Roy is currently preserved).

I learnt a great deal from long discussions with many individuals who possessed first hand experience of political developments during the thirties, especially of events covered in this volume. I tape-recorded my interviews with some of them; with some of the others I kept notes in longhand. In many cases it has been possible to check their recollections with relevant contemporary records in archives, or with studies published by other scholars, but the most invaluable aspect of these discussions and interviews was the insight they often offered which could not be obtained from books or records. My greatest debt is, of course, to Ellen Roy; among others whom I interviewed or with whom I had valuable discussions I wish particularly to record my gratitude to Tayab Shaikh, Philip Spratt, Louise Geissler, Ruth Fischer, Claire Thalheimer, Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyay, A. K. Pillai, Maniben Kara, V. B. Karnik, Anadi Bhaduri, Dharitri Ganguli, Rajani Mukherji, K. K. Sinha, M. C. Samaddar, M. L. Sen, Ram Singh, V. M. Tarkunde, Madhusudan Mahanti, C. T. Daru, and Swadesh Ranjan Das.

The late Dharmadas Goonavardhane who was an active member of the 'Royist' Group in the late thirties wrote several informative letters to me from his home at Dalawella, Unawatana in Sri Lanka in response to my inquiries. The late Thomas Rusch of Pasadena very generously provided me with a copy of his doctoral dissertation on the 'Role of the Congress Socialist Party in the Indian National Congress'. Several old and rare books were lent to me by Hariharprasad of Sasaram, Bihar; M. L. Sen and Oneil De, Patna; Shova Ganguli, S. M. Ganguli, Probodh

Bhattacharya, and Sushil Mukherji, Calcutta; Savitri Nigam, Lucknow; and B. R. Sukhthankar of Pune. To all of them my thanks.

I have received photographs relating to M. N. Roy and his associates from many sources and have been able to include only a selected number in the four volumes. For illustrations in this volume I am particularly grateful to Indumati Parikh, S. N. Nautiyal, S. N. Puri, Debabrata and Kabir Surchowdhuri, Biren Gupta, Dwipen Banerji, Hari Dev Sharma, and Ila D. Koirala. My apologies to those who sent me photographs from their personal collection but which I have been unable to include.

A very substantial part of the first draft of volume IV was typed and retyped by my two research assistants Kalyan Dawn and Tapan Mitra nearly two years ago. Work was seriously interrupted by my illness and by various claims on my time and energy. It could be resumed only at the beginning of 1994. My current assistant Kanai Paul has helped me in preparing the revised final typescript copy; his devoted and able assistance has enabled me to complete the work in spite of my failing health and other difficulties.

Sushil Bhadra has again very kindly gone carefully through the final typescript of this volume prior to its despatch to the publisher. Kanai Paul has earned my warm thanks by preparing the index.

Since the initiation of the project of editing and publishing *Selected Works of M. N. Roy* in several volumes, I have relied very heavily on Dr R. M. Pal of Delhi for maintaining liaison on my behalf with the management of the Oxford University Press. I am thankful to him for his unfailing help and advice, and to the staff of the Oxford University Press for their useful and friendly cooperation.

And finally my greatest debt of gratitude is to my wife Gita who has for all these years generously and cheerfully taken upon herself all familial chores and social obligations to enable me to devote myself full time to writing and research, and who has shared my problems and tribulations and given me strength and support in times of strain and distress. She has never grudged me my decision from the start of this research project neither to seek nor to accept any honorarium, royalty, or financial remuneration for the work which, though highly demanding, I have throughout greatly enjoyed, and which I see as a happy discharge of my intellectual obligation to a very major but still generally neglected revolutionary thinker of this century.

Calcutta
20 January 1995

Sibnarayan Ray

Introduction to Volume IV

When this edition of the *Selected Works of M. N. Roy* was originally planned a little over ten years ago, it was my intention to cover Roy's writings of the period 1917 to 1954 in six chronologically arranged volumes. I decided to exclude from the purview of this project such works as would require each a volume to itself (e.g. *Revolution and Counter-revolution in China*; *Memoirs*; *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*), and which, in any case, were readily available in the market. Instead I proposed to concentrate on writings that, for various reasons, had become virtually inaccessible, or which lay buried in journals and archives and had never been gathered into book form, but which represented his ideas and positions at various phases of his career. I discovered that such material required considerable investigation and research in India and abroad, and the selected texts demanded editorial introductions and explanatory notes.

Although it was known from the recollections of Saralabala Sarkar and other sources that M. N. Roy (at that time known by his parentally given name Narendra Nath Bhattacharya) was a regular contributor to the organs of the revolutionary nationalists of Bengal in the early years of this century, his authorship of particular pieces of writing could not be identified from within since the revolutionaries, for obvious reasons, did not put their names to those publications.[1] It was only after he had left India in 1915 in search of arms with a view to organizing an insurrection against British rule—a search that took him under various names and disguises through Malaysia, Indonesia, Indo-China, the Philippines, Japan, Korea, China, and the United States of America, and finally brought him to Mexico in 1917—that his earliest identifiable book was published.[2] By that time he had adopted at Stanford the name Manabendra Nath Roy, by which he would be subsequently known (even though he did continue to use other aliases for his clandestine revolutionary activities). A selection from his earliest identifiable book, *La Voz de la India*, written in Spanish and published from Mexico, was translated into English for this edition, and it constituted the opening section of the first volume covering the period 1917 to 1922 and included the complete texts of *India in Transition*: *What Do We Want* and *India's Problem and its Solution*, the original draft of the 'supplementary theses on the National and Colonial Question', and selections from *The Vanguard of Indian Independence* and *The Advance-Guard*.

The second volume of the *Selected Works* covered the period 1923 to 1927 and contained the full texts of *Political Letters* (1924) and *The Future* *of Indian Politics* (1926), selections from *One Year of Non-cooperation* (1923), *The Aftermath of Non-cooperation* (1926), and *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia i Kommunisticheskii Internatsional* (1927), and selections from *The Vangurard*, *The Communist International*, *The Masses of India*, and *International Press Correspondence*. These five years saw Roy reaching the apogee of his political career. By 1927 he was a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, the Presidium, the Secretariat, and the Orgbureau (and when the last two high power bodies were amalgamated to form the Political Secretariat he became a member of that body too), and member–secretary of the Chinese Commission.[3] When in November-December 1926 the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the ECCI decided to send him as chief of the Comintern delegation to the Chinese government at Wuhan, Roy clearly belonged to the highest echelon of the Comintern hieracy.[4]

It was initially my plan to devote the third volume to the period 1927 to 1936 covering Roy's break with the Comintern, and his years in opposition and in jail. But after having edited the first two volumes I found that I had in my collection such an abundance of relevant primary source material belonging to the period 1927–36 that even two volumes of the same size as the first two would hardly be adequate. A very substantial part of this material consisted of Roy's writings in German; they had not been previously translated into English, nor their contents examined by scholars who have so far written on Roy. Indeed, apart from his magnum opus, *Revolution and Counter-revolution in China* (German edition 1930; English edition 1946), very little of his writings of the period 1929–32 were known even to Roy-specialists. One of his polemical booklets published in Paris under the title *Les Allies Internationaux de l'Opposition du P. C. de l' U. R. S. S.* in 1927, and in Hamburg and Berlin under the title *Die Internationalen verbundeten der Opposition in der KPDSU* in 1928, never had an English version, nor was it ever referred to by Roy or his biographers or critics. The very large number of articles by him which were published in the Communist Opposition periodicals, *Das Volkrecht*, *Gegen den Strom, Arbeiter Politik*, and *Internationale Nachrichten der Kommunistischen Opposition* (*INKOPP*, edited jointly by M. N. Roy and August Thalheimer) were never brought together in the form of a book, and were virtually unknown to Roy scholars. There was an astonishing gap here in Roy-studies which I may modestly claim to have at last filled to a considerable degree in the third volume of *Selected Works*.

Indeed, the third volume proved to be much more exacting in terms of research and sustained investigation than the previous two. The writings in German had to be translated into English and references to contemporary personalities and events had to be much more carefully checked and elaborately explained in editorial notes because they were largely unfamiliar to readers of today. The total extent of material I had in hand was so large that more than half could not be accommodated due to constraints of space, and this involved very careful selection and elimination. Much of the material was not available in India, and therefore had to be discovered in and copied from archives in Europe and the United States.

I was, however, particularly fortunate in finding in Mr Gerd Callesen of Arbejderbevaegelsens Bibliotek og Arkiv of Copenhagen an unfailing helper who provided me not only with a photocopied set of Roy's contributions to *Gegen den Strom* that I had selected from the *inhaltsverzeichnis* of that periodical, but also with photocopies of much relevant material from *Das Volksrecht, Arbeiter-Politik, and INKOPP*. After translating, footnoting, editing, and eventually drastically eliminating a good part of this material, I still found that the typescript of the third volume ran to very much over a thousand pages (the limit I had set myself for each volume). Thus the third volume was able to cover only the period from 1927 to 1932. The period from 1932 to 1936 is now sought to be covered by this volume, a situation that was not anticipated when I had originally drawn up the project over a decade ago.[5]

All Roy's writings included in this Volume belong to his prison years. Roy returned to India in December 1930, and during the next seven months he worked clandestinely to lay the foundation of a revolutionary organization and to propagate his Marxist ideas and programme that were opposed to the extremist official line adopted by the Comintern at its Sixth Congress in 1928.[6] In that short time he was able to train groups of radicals and involve them in trade union work and the peasant movement. He also wrote and got clandestinely published a substantial body of political literature. Details of his activities and writings of this underground period are provided in the third volume of the *Selected Works*. 'Despite the fact that the police were continually hot on his heels', reported the Director of the Intelligence Bureau, his [Roy's]

> doctrines gained many adherents in Bombay and the United Provinces and at a later date in Calcutta and its environs. He made serious and by no means unsuccessful endeavours to impregnate the Congress with his views, and was received, and well received, by several of the Congress leaders in different parts of India.[7]

On 21 July 1931 he was arrested in Bombay and secretly removed to Kanpur, charged under Section 121 A of the Indian Penal Code ('conspiring to deprive the King Emperor of his sovereignty in India') on a warrant issued in 1924 in connection with the Cawnpore (Kanpur) Conspiracy Case. The committal proceedings opened before a magistrate on 7 August, and Roy was committed to the Sessions Court on 15 October. The trial took place not in an open court, but inside the jail where Roy had been imprisoned. When Roy refused to be tried surreptitiously in this manner he was 'manacled and forcibly brought to his trial by the jail superintendent and four non-Bengali wardens'.[8] He applied for trial by jury, but this was refused; there were no defence witnesses and he was not allowed to make his Defence Statement. The assessors who were appointed were divided in their view after listening to the prosecution case; two (Bhogilal and Suryaprasad) found him not guilty while the other two (Wazid Ali and Sheoprasad) found him guilty. The trial lasted from 3 November 1931 to 7 January 1932. Roy's arrest and trial were extensively reported in English and vernacular newspapers (e.g. *The Statesman*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, etc.) from 22 July 1931 to 10 January 1932. Roy described the trial as 'farce'.[9]

On 9 January the Additional Sessions Judge sentenced Roy 'to transportation for twelve years' which, in effect, meant twelve years of rigorous imprisonment. It was a savage sentence. That very night Roy was removed under strong police guard from Kanpur to the Central Jail in Bareilly.[10] He, however, succeeded in smuggling out his Defence statement which 'I was not allowed to make at the Sessions Court', and which was now printed and published outside British India by his followers—the full version under the title *My Defence* from the Vanguard Press, Pondicherry; and abridged version, *I Accuse*, by the Roy Defence Committee, New York office. The complete text of this statement has been included as the last item in the *Selected Works of M. N. Roy, Volume III*. The Roy Defence Committee included among its members Jawaharlal Nehru, who had already written to the Chief Secretary, U. P. Government, protesting against Roy's trial within the jail and the harassments inflicted on him by the jail authorities.[11] He also publicly recorded his admiration for Roy on account of the latter's 'great ability and his great sacrifice for India's freedom . . . The treatment he is receiving in the jail is very bad. . . . It is shameful that the government should treat a great opponent in this way'.[12] Roy was classified as a 'class B' prisoner and permitted 'to receive and send only one letter a month'. An appeal was filed against this verdict in the Allahabad High Court, but on 2 May 1933 the appeal was dismissed by Mr Justice J. Thom who, however, reduced the sentence to six years' rigorous imprisonment.[13]

Roy was in prison altogether for five years and four months—from July 1931 to January 1932 at District Jail, Kanpur; from January 1932 to May 1934 at Central Prison, Bareilly (which included a few days in April 1933 at District Jail, Allahabad, at the time of his appeal); from May 1934 to October 1934 at District Jail, Almora; from October 1934 to May 1935 back again at Central Prison, Bareilly; and from May 1935 to November 1936 at District Jail, Dehra Dun. The iron constitution he had developed in the demanding school of his revolutionary underground years, and on which his colleagues, both from the nationalist and the communist periods, invariably commented in their recollections, was irretriveably damaged by the conditions of his life in confinement. Writing about Roy, Jawaharlal lamented that the life of 'One of the bravest and ablest of India's sons' was 'sliding downhill to the brink'.[14] In jail Roy lost weight, developed cardiac trouble, the abscess in his left ear for which he had to undergo operations in Moscow and Berlin again began causing him acute pain, and he showed symptoms of tubercular infection. Nehru, who had himself been arrested, noted in his Jail diary (4 June 1933): 'with incipient T. B. he [Roy] lies in Bareilly Central Prison in this heat, probably in solitary confinement.'[15] But though the prison years were physically ruinous, his spirit kept itself above the harsh and debilitating circumstances and retained its integrity and vigour. The material selected and presented in this volume would leave no unprejudiced reader in any doubt on how his idealism and intellect, his alertness to events in India and the world, his unshakeable commitment to freedom, justice, and truth, continued to be fully alive even in this long hour of darkness and incarceration.

Fortunately most of the letters he wrote from various prisons to his future wife Ellen Gotschalk (1904–60) have survived, and despite restrictions and censorship imposed by the jail authorities on what might be allowed to be communicated with official permission, these letters offer us illuminating glimpses of Roy's life, personality, and thinking during those years. Other letters he wrote to two other very important women in his life who had lived and worked with him successively for a number of years, his first wife Evelyn Trent (1892–1970) who had been with him from 1916 to 1925, and Louise Geissler (1899–1973) who accompanied him to China in 1927 and rescued him from the Soviet Union in 1929—some of which I was privileged to see when I visited the recipients years after Roy's death—do not seem to have survived their recipients' death, or at least my persistent efforts to trace them have proved fruitless.[16] However, the nearly complete set of letters to Ellen is preserved in the M. N. Roy archives of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. They were edited by Ellen Roy and published as a book in 1943, which has since been reprinted several times. They are not included in this volume since the book *Letters from Jail* is readily available. As Dr A. S. Erulkar quite rightly pointed out in his 'Introduction' to that book, these letters:

> reveal a highly developed modern mind, rich, sensitive, and reacting energetically to men, events and things around, as they are, and as they are becoming, and with a profound confidence to remake them all . . . We get a glimpse of his versatile mind, with its extensive range of interests from music to mathematics, of his broad sympathies and fine sense of humour. . . . It is only natural that this mind, brought up and cultivated in the best traditions of modern civilization . . . should at times find the conditions in this country

> quite disgusting. It is true that he sometimes loses patience with them . . . But there is the hope and the will to change it all. That hope and that will, which go like a counterpoint through all these letters, inspire all his activities, and they alone must have carried him through those endless years of what he calls 'living death'.[17]

The first letter to Ellen from the District Jail, Cawnpore (Kanpur), wrongly dated in the published book as 11 April 1931, but whose more likely date is 11 August, briefly indicated that he intended first to prepare his defence which he wished to conduct personally; but here he also proposed to 'utilize the time' in prison by undertaking 'a special study of the History of Materialism and of the cultural importance of the Middle Ages'.[18] He wished Ellen to contact his friend August Thalheimer (1884–1948), a major Marxist theoretician who was also a founder of the Communist Party of Germany and then a leader of the Communist Opposition, and seek his advice regarding books that she might send to Roy in jail bearing upon his projected studies. In the same letter he asked her if she could 'send me the paper submitted by the Soviet Delegation to the recent International Congress of History and Science held in London'.

Thus, within less than three weeks of his arrest, we find him not only preparing to defend himself but also foreshadowing the major intellectual activity that would occupy him during his harsh and lonely prison years and keep the flame within him burning against the bleak winds of despair.

Roy had very little formal schooling, but was by temperament a true intellectual who retained to the very end his immense appetite for knowledge and his extraordinary ability to think for himself. When I came to know him reasonably well I was struck as much by his personality as by the keenness of his intellect and the range and depth of his erudition. He taught himself not only from the school of life but also from libraries and from discourses with some of the ablest thinkers of his time. He had mastered five European languages (Spanish, German, Russian, French, and, of course, English) and published in each of them. Activist though he was, in the changed circumstances he decided to convert his prison life into his school.

From the letters we get a fair indication of the nature of his studies and the research projects he planned to pursue in prison, and circumstances permitting, after his release. He referred frequently to his own collection of books lying in Weil's cellar in Berlin. Gibbon's monumental classic *Decline and Fall*, for him a work one 'cannot read too often', and Montaigne's *Essays* are 'among the pleasantest and cleverest things ever written'. Lange's *History of Materialism*; Feuerbach's *Das'Wesen des Christentums*; Thalheimer on Spinoza; Leckey's *History of European Morals* and *History of Rationalism*; Draper's *History of the Intellectual Development* *in Europe*; Renan's *Averroes et Averroism*; Ueberweg's *History of Philosophy*; Lyell's *Antiquity of Man*; Taylor's *Primative Culture*; Dalton's *New System of Chemical Philosophy*; Broad's *Scientific Thought*; Russell's *The Analysis of Matter*; Ritchie's *Scientific Method* were, as early as 16 February 1932, among some of the classics he wanted Ellen to fetch from his own collection in Weil and mail to him at his Central Prison address in Bareilly.[19]

The cellar, his personal collection of books, and his published and unpublished manuscripts, together with the famous German publishing house of Malik Verlag that housed them, were subsequently destroyed by the Nazis. He wished 'to have all the works of Bertrand Russell and Whitehead'. Among other reading material that he asked for were Reinhold Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, Bergson's *Les Deux Sources de la Morale et de la Religion*, 'the latest works of Jeans, Eddington and others belonging to their school', Planck, Soddy, Haldane, Heisenberg, Bohr, Dirac, Schroedinger, and Reichenbach; C. G. Darwin's *The New Conception of Matter*, Alexander's *Space, Time and Deity*, Mumford's *Technique and Civilization*, Calverton's *The Passing of the Gods*, Seller's *Philosophy of Physical Realism*, de Broglie's *Conséquences de la Relativité*, *Théorie de la Quantification dans la Nouvelle Mécanique*, works of Langevin, new papers by Einstein on the Unified Field Theory published in the journal of the American Physical Society, and on 'Physics and Reality' published in the journal of the Franklin Institute of Philadelphia, and his recently published book, *The World as I See It*; Irene Curie's 'recent scientific research (done in collaboration with her husband)'—the last item is mentioned in the letter dated 23 August 1936, a few days before his release from jail on 20 November. He also required Haldane's *Philosophical Basis of Biology*, Whitehead's *Process and Reality*, Burtt's *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science*, and the series published under de Broglie's direction under the title *Exposés de philosophie des sciences*. Later when I came to know him well, I found most of these books in his personal library at 13 Mohini Road, Dehra Dun[20].

From the letters it is abundantly clear that the books asked for were not casually or arbitrarily chosen but had a direct bearing on the projects that were taking shape in his mind. Initially there were several relatively shorter projects, but gradually one grand project began to emerge. He hoped to outline an all-embracing philosophy that would not be inconsistent with Marxism, but would draw upon the findings of modern physical and biological sciences and 'reformulate the basic principles of materialism in the light of our growing macrocosmic and microcosmic knowledge', explode the widely held false contrast between a 'Materialist West' and a 'Spritualist East', explain the causes of progress and retrogression in human history and illuminate the contemporary situation in India and the world.

The project was very ambitious, and during his years in jail he could only prepare notes and drafts that would run to nine large-sized, closely written, bound volumes of manuscripts. Immediately after his release from jail he would be in the thick of public life and political movements and controversies. Selected sections of the jail manuscripts would be published as books, but it would be another twelve years before he would find the necessary privacy and leisure to attempt what he had planned to do during the prison years: write a full length and systematic statement of his *Weltanschauung* or philosophy. The result was his magnum opus, *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution,* in which he made use of a good part of the material gathered and prepared during the prison years; but by the time he wrote that classic he had already moved beyond Marxism to Radical Humanism. I was responsible for publishing that work, but could not raise enough capital to bring it out as a single volume. The first volume was published in April 1952, the second was a posthumous publication (May 1955).

I have already mentioned that shortly after his arrest and confinement in Kanpur Jail, in his very first letter to Ellen, he indicated his desire 'to make a special study of the History of Materialism and of the cultural importance of the Middle Ages'. 'I am planning a book or two on Hindu philosophy and Indian culture', he wrote on 6 January 1932, 'Feuerbach will be very helpful. I shall also want Max Weber's work on Asiatic religions'. We find him welcoming suggestions and comments on what would later grow into his project from his friend August Thalheimer, who later authored a study of the great grammarian Panini. Roy sent a draft of the table of contents planned in fourteen chapters on what he provisionally entitled 'A Scientific View of Nature, Life and History' (21 May 1932). Serious illness and consequent hospitalization caused a break of some months, but even in such adverse circumstances he managed to write several 'longish essays on a variety of subjects. I have just finished a very interesting one: "On the Historical Role of Islam". . . . Another, also completed, is "Some Reflexions on the Hindu Ideal of Asceticism"' (7 Dec. 1932). *The Historical Role of Islam* would be subsequently published as a separate monograph, and is included in this volume. His letter of 9 January 1933, wanted Ellen to pass on to Thalheimer Roy's view on 'Sankhya's affinity with Epicurus', and his conclusion that 'the cornerstone of Materialism in Indian Philosophy is to be found in the Vaisheshik system of Kanad . . . his Brahman has no more real existence than the creator in the system of Descartes and Newton'. On 6 April 1933: 'I did manage to finish a piece of work . . . on materialist thought in antiquity, including India.' On 23 Decmber 1933 he mentioned as 'nearly complete' a manuscript of about 600 pages with the provisional title 'Spiritualism of the Western Civilization' 'divided into three parts: Christian and Medieval Thought; Modern Philosophy; and the conclusion of the survey in support of the thesis that Western Civilization is not "Materialist".' On 19 June 1934 he lamented from Almora District Jail that the manuscript of his Critique of Contemorary Neo-mysticism was 'in a rather disorganized form—partly in notes which can be transcribed in the final form only by myself'. On 30 September 1934 he sent Ellen the table of contents of his projected work, but 'the problem was to transmute pure, mathematics into a plain human language'. On 30 January 1935: 'For the last two years I have been occupied with the question: What really is the world according to the Theory of Relativity'. Since he knew Einstein personally from his long years of organizational work and scholarly researches in Berlin, he asked Ellen to pass on to the great scientist this question on his behalf: What did Einstein mean by the statement that 'his religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural laws, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection'. 'I would like to hear from him on this point.'[21]

On 19 February 1935: 'I am leisurely working upon the Philosophical Consequences of the Theory of Relativity.' On 21 June 1935 he reported that he had decided to expand his study into 'Philosophical Consequences of Modern Science', and gave a detailed breakdown of the proposed table of contents divided into seven chapters to which he now wished to add two more on 'Evidence of Biology' and 'Evidence of Psychology'. The letter of 20 August 1935, mentioned a delightful diversion—at Bareilly Jail he had 'raised a nice cat', and 'I began to see the world through my cat's green eyes, and that was an amusing sight. So much so that I was encouraged to record 'The Reflexions of my Cat'—something on the lines of the *Autobiography of Alice* [B.] *Toklas* by Gertrude Stein. Nothing so very highbrow, of course?' This piece of writing (that reminds me of Bankim Chandra Chatterji's *Kamalakanta*) was subsequently published as a book and is included in this volume. On 20 November 1935 he reported that he was still working on his principal project, but

> its scope has widened so much that the title will have to be changed to something more comprehensive, such as 'Philosophy, Religion and Science'. The chapter on 'The Philosophical Consequences of Modern Science' has grown into a large size book of ten chapters. The entire book has to be perhaps in three volumes, or broken up into three different books belonging to one series.

On 21 December we find him occupied with 'Kant Studies', which is 'necessary to show up Kant against Kant'. (I may here note in passing that many Marxists became conscious of the limitations of Marxism as a philosophy by re-reading Kant—this happened particularly with Marxist philosophers of Poland, Hungary and Germany).

In a somewhat long letter of 22 March, 1936, he anticipated that 'if I carry on my present plan, several years must be put in. The main work is still to be written. I mean, the Critical history of Indian culture in general, and the treatise on Hindu philosophy, particularly.' But if India is one of his central interests, his other and more pressing intellectual occupation seems to be to digest and bring into a unified system the revolutionary findings of the modern sciences that would give philosophy a dependable structure and movement. In the course of the same letter he gave some indication of his approach. 'I have made the bold and unorthodox suggestion', he wrote, 'that the difficulties (about the problems of substance and causality) raised by the latest theories of quantum physics . . . will be eventually cleared up by the application of the physical principle of Relativity to microcosmic events'. On 24 May he was still 'occupied with the epistemological consequences of the Theory of Relativity' and was waiting anxiously for a copy of Einstein's new paper on Physics and Reality. On 24 June 1936: 'I just finished the chapter on the Theory of Knowledge. It is about fifty thousand words.'

On 20 July 1936, after having completed five years in jail, he was at last informed that he would be released after another four months. He was again very ill and bedridden; the events in the world outside were most discouraging; he felt stale, and 'I have been rejecting in disgust what I wrote for several days' (24 September). Nonetheless, aware as he was that the formulations made by Marx, Engels, and others 'nearly a century ago' . . . 'require revision, or elaboration or reformulation, in the light of the advance of science, on which the fundamental principles of our philosophy rest', he kept on asking himself if terms and concepts like 'matter' or 'dialectic' should not be modified: 'The disappearance of the distinction between mass and energy demands a new definition of objective reality. . . . Other people's minds are parts of the world which exists objectively for me' (20 July 1936). The inquiry into the nature of 'an objective mind' leads him to biology and psychology. On 23 August he wrote that the 'structure of the book has been changed' and gave a two page outline of the new chapters on biology and psychology that 'have assumed as much importance as those on the physical sciences'. On 24 September, still bedridden, we find him going 'out of his plan', to engage in a written controversy with Sir Shah Mohammad Suleiman over the latter's critique of Relativity and Quantum theories in a published paper. Besides, 'I have done one of those extra bits of experimental writing'—an essay on the 'Psychology of the Seer', dealing with mystic or religious experience.[22]

I have quoted extensively from Roy's *Letters from Jail* partly because it is not included in this volume, but even more because these passages provide the context of the selected material forming the second part of this volume, thereby obviating the necessity of a separate detailed introduction. Hopefully, some day, like his one-time friend and colleague on the Comintern Executive, Antonio Gramsci, Roy too will have the complete text of his nine-volume prison manuscripts competently edited and published.[23] That has never been, and realistically could not be, within the purview of the present limited project of the *Selected Works*. From the *Letters* we find that even while he was buried in 'the tomb', Roy had been urging Ellen to explore with his friends in Germany (Thalheimer, Brandler, Pollock, Felix, etc.) the possibility of establishing a branch in India of the Institute of Social Research of Frankfurt where Roy could carry on his studies and investigations after his prison term was over. 'The principal work of the Institute must be production of literature.' He, therefore, proposed to found a publishing house on the lines of that of his progressive German publisher, Malik Verlag (22 March 1936). Such an Institute and publishing house 'would help me greatly to continue the scientific work to which I shall most probably devote myself largely, for some time at any rate' (24 May 1936).[24] He expected 'the cooperation of some distinguished professors' and would himself 'take up the more directly sociological work—the critical history of Indian Philosophy'. However, soon after his release he would be caught up in the vortex of politics, and although he eventually succeeded in founding both a publishing house (Renaissance Publishers) and an Institute (Indian Renaissance Institute), the circumstances never proved to be sufficiently favourable to put either on a sound and secure footing.

That despite all the obstacles, harassments, and sufferings of prison life he was able to persist in his studies and research bears witness to his indomitable spirit. His health was in ruins—the terrible heat of Bareilly where he was jailed for over half the total period of his imprisonment, affected all his vital organs—he was repeatedly ill and had to be hospitalized several times. His heart, kidneys, lungs, and digestive organs were severely damaged. He lost several teeth, his bones ached, his hair thinned, he quite often ran a temperature, and there was trouble with his infected ear. Placed in the B class category of prisoners he was initially not entitled even to writing material.

> Eventually, special permission was given, but I was allowed to have only one notebook at a time; once that was used up, I could get another only by depositing the old one in the jail office. Consequently, notes made during months of study could not be used for writing later on. Although friends kept me supplied with plenty of books. I could not make free use of them, because I was not allowed to have more than three at a time. [Roy's subsequent footnote to Letter dated 19 April 1932].

'Jail', wrote Roy in that same letter, 'is not a university. One is placed there for other purposes than to make scientific researches or to write books.' Books were often withheld by censors or prison officials, or simply disappeared. Books in languages other than English were prima facie suspect; since the jailors could not read them they would not be delivered to the prisoner at all; novels even by great contemporary German writers like Thomas Mann, Heinrich Mann, Leon Feuchtwanger were returned by the censors to their senders. He wanted a typewriter which was refused. In July 1934, as a punishment he was denied access to all writing facilities. 'I am not allowed to have any blank paper, pen, or even a pencil' (18 July 1934).[25] Protesting against such preposterous restrictions, Albert Einstein wrote from Rhodes Island on 17 September 1934 to the British Embassy in Washington urging that adequate research facilities be made available to the prisoner who was a scholar of eminence, whatever his political beliefs might be.[26] The facilities were reluctantly restored.

Apart from his strong will, Roy was sustained during these dark years by Ellen's unfailing love (it is a great pity that her letters of this period to Roy did not survive their tempestuous political life after Roy's release and Ellen's arrival in India in 1937), the loyalty of many of his friends in India and abroad, and by his deep love of life. A prison in India, as he rightly noted, 'is the asylum mostly for victims of poverty experienced through generations' (16 Feb. 1932). 'A prisoner has no choice. A prisoner is a thing. He does not stay in one place or another. He is *kept*' (7 May 1934). As a B class prisoner, he was not 'allowed anything private by way of food, clothes, bedding, etc' (19 April 1932). He was given 'one iron cot with straw mattress, a table, a stool and a shelf for my use; besides some plates, etc. for eating, drinking and washing' (8 August 1932). For months the heat was intense, aggravating his heart trouble; he suffered from rheumatic pain, and abscess at the root of the molar, freezing feet in winter, was often bedridden and 'afraid of being a physical wreck'. Life in prison reminded him of Dante 'lying in the Inferno contemptuous of the fires of hell' (30 June 1933). He was put in bar fetters—'heavy iron things on your ankles'—every time he was moved from one prison to the next. Nonetheless, recollections of things he enjoyed and loved when he was free gave him sustenance—music like Beethoven's symphonies, the overture of *Igor*, Mendelssohn's Funeral March, Debussy's *Thais*; Paul Robeson's songs, and acting in O'Neill's *Emperor Jones* in Berlin; 'the deep blue sky with its billions of stars'; 'good Dutch grub, a combination of French finesse and German solidity', 'fascinating red balls of cheese with golden interior and piquant taste'; fireside chat over *Asti spumanti* or Benedictine or Chartreuse Verte, or lively conversation with friends over a bottle of Johannesberger; fresh air of the mountains and glorious laughter. He felt nostalgic for these, and often dreamt of enjoying them again when he regained freedom. 'Ugliness', he knew, 'deadens the soul' (22 March 1936).

Flowers he deeply loved, and there are frequent references to the happiness their sight brought to him in his harsh and deprived prison life. 'I have bright yellow flowers in the small yard in front of my Jail' (Cawnpore, 21 Nov 1931). 'The rains have brought some flowers in our courtyard—red, white and salmon coloured' (Almora, 18 July 1934), 'A crop of my flowers—the red, purple and lavender ones—is dying. But the next one is almost ready to follow. This time the flowers will be yellow—marigold. . . . All in my tiny box—on the narrow strip of ground along the foot of its outer shell' (Dehra Dun District Jail, 22 Sept. 1935). 'Summer is the season for jasmines. I shall try to have some planted. You have no idea of tropical jasmine' (Dehra Dun, 24 Feb. 1936). Besides caste, obscurantism, social inequality and injustice, hypocrisy and endless superstition, what also appalled him was the generally held view in India that 'love of beauty is a crime. In order to be appreciated beauty must have a content of virtue.' And 'the slavish, enslaving, notion of virtue' was of the kind 'that kills the spirit of man'. 'I am getting hungry for some beauty of life' (22 March 1934).[27]

When he was not occupied with his more serious studies and writing, Roy enjoyed reading fiction—works sent by friends in India and abroad. Among his favourite novelists were Hardy, Sinclair Lewis, Galsworthy, Saratchandra (especially *Seshprasna*), Pearl Buck, Heinrich Mann, Lion Feuchtwanger, Anatole France, Barbusse, Ibsen, Zola—his literary taste was, I imagine, largely influenced by his schooling in the principles of social realism and radicalism. He deprecated Hemingway (Ellen's favourite), Aldous Huxley, Michael Arlen, and was critical of Malraux whose literary artistry he recognized but who seemed to spoil 'the realist texture of his book' by bringing into it a 'very large element of romanticism'. 'Malraux's heroes are all introspective—to the point of being morbid' (20 May 1935). For relief from the strain of prison life he would turn to detective fiction—his favourite was Philo Vance. At the end of the fifth year of imprisonment he passed through some terrible moments of utter despair—there are suicidal undertones in his letter of 24 May 1936. 'I am not going to suffer more than five years of this living death', he wrote. 'To be released from prison is beyond my power. But to shuffle off the mortal coil is not.' But his work which 'is my only joy in this dreary life' (July 21 1935) rescued him from the 'spiritual crisis'.[28]

This work involved not only the research and writing which he put down in the nine volumes of his prison manuscripts, but also a substantial quantity of political tracts, manifestoes, letters, and instructions he managed to compose and send out clandestinely to his outside contacts. Before his arrest he had trained and organized a small band of followers.

Inside jail, despite the vigilance of the prison authorities, he was also able to make 'secret allies' among fellow convicts and warders who helped him to smuggle out his illegal writings. In the early forties I personally got to know one of these fellow prisoners of Roy who had been convicted for his part in the Delhi conspiracy case and later became a Roy follower. In jail, Rajendra Dutt Nigam used to copy 'many of Roy's manuscripts and send them out in his own handwriting so that, even if detected, they might not be traced to Roy'.[29] R. D. Nigam became, after his own release, the principal organizer of the Radical Democratic party in the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh). These writings, sent out surreptitiously, quite often reached the contacts for whom they were intended, and they were published and distributed by them. The prison authorities would impose additional restrictions, warders were changed, convicts were threatened and punished, but the flow of material did not cease during the jail years. Ellen Roy mentioned in her recollections how Roy 'enjoyed studying the strange cross-section of his countrymen with their virtues, vices and oddities whom he met in jail, after so many years abroad', and how he 'treasured greatly the selfless devotion and loyalty' of those who 'helped him in all manner of ways and kept up his contact with the world outside at great risk to themselves'. 'When once things became too hot, an ingenious sweeper manufactured an airtight cylinder in which he smuggled out letters hidden in the conservancy drum'.[30] A selection of these clandestinely written, smuggled out and published writings form Part One of this volume.

Momentous events were taking place in India and abroad during these prison years. The Great Depression that overtook the world shortly before Roy's departure from Europe deepened in the opening years of the thirties and shook the very foundations of the politico–economic order that had been globally established since the industrial revolution. In Germany the Weimar Republic, which had been shaky from the start but had nevertheless produced an astonishing cultural harvest in poetry, drama, fiction, painting, music, and the theatre during the twenties, collapsed, offering scarcely any resistance. While the Communists, following the ultra left line adopted at the Sixth Congress, continued to consider the Social Democrats as their principal enemy and therefore to attack and undermine them, the Nazis under the virulent leadership of Adolf Hitler fully exploited the shattering experiences of the Great Depression, and were voted to power by the overwhelming majority of the German people in 1934. Hitler, as 'der Fuehrer' or 'the leader', built up a totalitarian corporate state that was aggressively racist, militarist, and nationalist, with all power centralized in the hands of the Nazis effectively eliminating all opposition, including every political party and other institutions, except those directly controlled by the National Socialist Party.

In the twenties Benito Mussolini had already established a Fascist totalitarian state in Italy. Taking advantage of the feebleness of the League of Nations, while Nazi Germany repudiated disarmament (1933) imposed on it by the Treaty of Versailles, Fascist Italy was, by the autumn of 1935, launched upon a war of conquest in Abyssinia which it brought to a successful conclusion in May 1936 by a ruthless use of incendiary bombs and gas. In the same year General Franco, at the head of Moroccan troops, led a revolt against the Republican Government in Spain. A savage civil war raged for two years through the peninsula, with Germany and Italy providing undeclared military support to Franco. Meanwhile Japan, already in control of Manchuria, invaded the province of Jehol at the end of 1932, and reached the Great Wall of China in 1933. The world in the thirties was moving with relentless rapidity towards the greatest conflagration in human history.

While the United States began to reconstruct its economy from the severe ravages of the Great Depression under the leadership of Franklin Roosevelt and his policy of the New Deal, in the Soviet Union the first five-year plan brought about a rapid expansion of state industrialism, especially in the heavy staple products, but forced collectivization of agriculture proved to be a very costly failure. It is now generally recognized that, like the Fascists and the Nazis, the Bolsheviks were also committed to the theory and practice of totalitarian dictatorship. Although the series of essays that Roy wrote and published in *Gegen den Strom* under the title 'Die Krisis der Kommunistischen Internationale' from September 1929 to March 1930—translated and published in the *Selected Works of M. N. Roy, Vol. III*—did indicate some of the totalitarian features of the Communist system, it would take him several years after his release from jail to realize fully the anti-libertarian nature of the communist ideology. In any case, under Stalin's leadership during the early thirties, millions of people in the Soviet Union were uprooted, imprisoned, sent to work in slave labour camps, or simply liquidated, with a view to industrializing the economy and building up Russia once again into a great power. Through a series of purges and fake trials Stalin eliminated the Old Guard of the party leadership and centralized all power in his own hands.

However, the phenomenon of Fascism–Nazism that liquidated socialists, communists, and liberals with equal thoroughness within its territories and gave unambiguous notice of its expansionist intentions, sent shock-waves and obliged the Soviet Union, together with its instrument, the Comintern, to revise its global strategy. At its Seventh Congress in 1935 (that also proved to be its last) the Comintern abandoned the extreme leftist policy adopted at the Sixth Congress and moved to the policy of United Front; a policy that Roy had been advocating for quite a long time.[31]

In prison Roy wrote, on the one hand, the draft of a book on Fascism, and on the other, a Letter to the Communist International hoping that with the change of policy the latter would take him back into its fold. That hope, of course, was not fulfilled. Selected portions from the book on Fascism and the full text of the Letter are included in this volume.

Great changes were also taking place in India in the early thirties. In March 1930 the Congress under Gandhi's leadership had called the Civil Disobedience Movement. This was suspended in March 1931 when the Gandhi–Irwin peace talks led to a pact. But the Second round Table Conference in London (Sept.–Dec., 1931) that Gandhi attended as the sole representative of the Congress, proved infructuous; it only sharpened the division between the leadership of the Congress and those of the Muslims and the Untouchables. Gandhi resumed the Civil Disobedience Movement in January 1932; the Congress was outlawed; a very large number of people were arrested; but soon the movement lost vigour, and it was again suspended (and virtually ended) in May 1934. The British in the meantime had gone ahead formulating proposals for an Indian Constitution; a White Paper had been issued in March 1933 on which the Joint Select Committee of the British Parliament had reported in 1934, and in August 1935 the Government of India Act received Royal Assent. While suspending Civil Disobedience the Congress adopted the Council-entry programme in May 1934.[32] The Congress Socialist Party was founded at the same time. The process of so-called 'decolonization' which would force the British bourgeoisie to share power with the Indian vested interests, but which would seek to suppress the forces of social revolution in India—a process already apprehended by Roy in his writings of the twenties—was now gaining momentum. Roy carefully noted these developments from behind bars, and his views and instructions were smuggled out to his contacts outside to be clandestinely published and circulated.

But as I have already noted, political developments were not Roy's only, or even his primary preoccupation in jail. Novel ideas with revolutionary philosophical implications were being formulated and debated upon in the physical sciences, and Roy was very keen to follow these developments and re-examine and reformulate the system of ideas that he had very largely imbibed from his study of Marxism. The prison letters and the books he asked for bear ample witness to his concentration on these developments. He had personally known Einstein in Berlin, and unlike some other Marxists did not see in the Theory of Relativity any threat to the notion of a law-governed universe. But Werner Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle and the development of quantum mechanics by him, Erwin Schroedinger, Paul Dirac, and others undermined the basic assumption of causality and replaced it, at the level of microcosmic phenomena, by unpredictability and statistical probability. Einstein who had played, together with Max Planck and Nils Bohr, a very important role in the development of the quantum theory, objected strongly to the introduction of 'an unavoidable element of unpredictability or randomness into science. . . . Einstein never accepted that the Universe was governed by chance.'[33] He was trying to reconcile in a Unified Field theory the formulations of both relativity and quantum mechanics—an endeavour that was not crowned with success. Roy too wanted to formulate a philosophy that would be consonant with the findings of the sciences. He was much interested in L. de Broglie's 'dual conception of matter' (22 April 1936) and in the philosophical writings of Hans Reichenbach (at that time Professor of Natural Philosophy at Berlin University) and of Roy W. Sellers (Professor of Philosophy at the University of Wisconsin). Reichenbach subsequently became Professor of Philosophy at the University of California.[34] Although Roy made extensive notes in his Prison Manuscripts, the jail conditions did not favour organizing them into a systematic formulation of what he occasionally referred to in his *Letters* and elsewhere as 'the philosophical consequences of Modern Science'. I am inclined to think that besides the restraints and disabilities of prison life, the residual hold of the Marxist ideology, still quite, strong, might also have delayed an independent formulation in his case. In any event, after his release from jail he took out portions of the jail manuscripts, and edited and published them in the form of separate books. It was only after the Second World War that the outlines of an alternative philosophy began to take shape in his mind, which he formulated at first as a set of theses and subsequently developed in his magnum opus *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*.

This volume, covering the period 1932–36 has been planned in two parts of an almost equal number of pages. In the first part I have included nearly all his political writings that he managed to smuggle out during his prison years—most of which were published illegally by his followers, and some immediately banned by the government. I write 'nearly' because there may be other clandestine writings of this period that I have not been able to trace or get hold of. What have been included were discovered in archives or came from private collections. To each item in this part I have added an editorial introduction and explanatory notes. The second part comprises selections from the Prison Manuscripts. I have reproduced the texts in this part in the form they were taken out, edited, and published by Roy after his release from jail, instead of the original manuscript form where texts are often discontinuous and have to be brought together from different handwritten volumes to elicit the continuity of an argument. Besides the handwritten pages were often only drafts that the author alone was capable of bringing into some final shape. In the second part editorial introductions and notes have been deliberately minimized.

It would be a formidable but worthwhile task to bring out the complete text of the nine jail volumes under suitable editorial supervision.

That task is beyond me, but I may here briefly indicate what I have done since I first came across the manuscripts. After Ellen Roy's death in tragic circumstances in 1960, the Prison Manuscripts were brought from Dehra Dun to Bombay where I was then working as a professor. As a member of the Board of Trustees of the Indian Renaissance Institute I got five typed mirror copies made of the nine manuscript volumes, so that the original text might not be damaged by frequent handling. A page by page abstract of the manuscripts was also prepared that ran to a total of 110 typed pages. It also contained some physical description of each bound volume.

In 1963 I went abroad, having accepted an appointment as Chairman of the newly established Department of Indian Studies at the University of Melbourne, Australia. I left the Prison Manuscripts and the five typed mirror copies with Professors A. B. Shah and G. D. Parikh, both trustees of IRI and then situated in Bombay. The manuscripts were subsequently transferred to the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in New Delhi together with all the other papers that had been assidously collected and organized by Ellen Roy to constitute the M. N. Roy Archives. I kept with me for future reference a copy of the page by page typed abstract of the contents of the Prison Manuscripts.

In 1981 when I returned to India after teaching abroad for eighteen years I tried to obtain a set of the mirror copies that I had had prepared in 1961–2. But no one seemed to know what had happened to them. After making enquiries at more than a hundred places I succeeded eventually in tracing an incomplete and damaged set in Jaipur that I took from there to Calcutta. There were however many pages missing from that dilapidated set and these had again to be copied from the original handwritten volumes that fortunately are carefully preserved in the Nehru Museum.

With the help of the page by page abstract I have been more or less able to locate portions in the mirror copy that were incorporated and edited by M. N. Roy in several books published by him. Where I have had some doubt because of the poor state of the mirror copy I had to go to the Nehru Museum in New Delhi to check them against the original handwritten copy. A few details are provided in the editorial introduction to the second part of the present volume. For various reasons it has not been possible for me to stay for long periods in New Delhi. I did not apply for a fellowship nor accept any honorarium for my researches and editorial work on these volumes, and New Delhi is a rather expensive city, not particularly hospitable to an outsider.

The project has been planned in six volumes, but for reasons of health and other pressing commitments this is the last volume I will be editing. The fifth and sixth volumes will I hope be edited by others. I take this opportunity of thanking everyone who has helped me in this project over the past ten years. My debt to individuals and institutions is duly acknowledged in each volume. It was my privilege to have worked with M. N. Roy and Ellen Roy for some of the most intellectually stimulating years of my life, and I feel happy and grateful to have been able to contribute towards making a good part of Roy's rare and inspiring works accessible to new generations of readers and scholars.

SNR.

Notes

[1] Saralabala Sarkar, 'My Recollections of Young Naren', in *M. N. Roy*: *Philosopher–Revolutionary*, ed. Sibnarayan Ray, Calcutta, 1984, p. 27.

[2] *M. N. Roy's Memoirs*, Delhi, 1984.

[3] These details of his position in the Comintern hierarchy were reported in *Inprecor*, VI (1926), nos. 12 (p. 181), 17 (p. 255), 83 (p. 1432), and 93 (p. 1646).

[4] 'Seventh Plenum of the enlarged ECCI', *Inprecor*, VI, 83. Also Robert C. North and Xenia J. Eudin, *M. N. Roy's Mission to China*, Berkeley and L. A., 1963.

[5] For the original Project *see* Introduction to *Selected Works of M. N. Roy, Vol. 1*, ed. Sibnarayan Ray, O. U. P., 1987.

[6] For the ultra-left policy, see *Protokoll des 6 Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale*, July–Sept. 1928, 4 Vols., Hamburg 1928.

[7] Sir Horace Williamson, *India and Communism*, 1933; Editions Indian rpt. Calcutta, 1976, p. 163.

[8] *Ananda Bazar Patrika,* 4.11.1931.

[9] *The Statesman*, 11.12.1931.

[10] *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, 14.1.1932.

[11] *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol. 5, 1973, p. 329. 'I am a member of his [Roy's] defence Committee . . . But not only was I not permitted to see him but all manner of restrictions have been placed on visitors and counsels for him. As the trial is held inside the jail this also keeps out almost everybody interested in him . . . he is harassed in a variety of ways. Roy is a man of ability and note who has held a very high position and who has an international reputation.' Letter dated 16 Oct. 1931.

[12] *The Bombay Chronicle*, 9.11.1931.

[13] For the verdict, see *M. N. Roy: Philosopher–Revolutionary*, pp. 134–44 (rpt. from AIR 1933, Allahabad, 498).

[14] Jawaharlal Nehru, *Manabendranath Roy*, YSL pamplet no. 4, Poona, n. d.

[15] Nehru, *Selected Works, Vol.* 5, p. 478.

[16] When she died, Evelyn Trent left a box containing her private papers. Only a few of them are preserved at the Hoover Institute which graciously provided me with photocopies, but the principal part of the collection seems to have mysteriously disappeared. Louise Geissler's private papers went after her death to her sister Eva Walter, but when the latter retired into an old-age asylum these papers too were consigned to oblivion—they were untraceable.

[17] Abraham S. Erulkar, Introduction to M. N. Roy, *Fragments of a Prisoner's Diary, Vol. III*: *Letters from Jail*, rpt. Calcutta, 1965, pp. iii–iv.

[18] *Letters from Jail*, p. 2.

[19] Ibid., p. 17.

[20] For the various quotations and books mentioned, *Letters from Jail pp*. 58, 61–2, 115, 139, 162, 166, 176, 182, and 199.

[21] For quotes and references, ibid., pp. 2, 11, 23, 40, 47, 68, 88, 97, and 109.

[22] Ibid., pp. 123–5, 131–2, 145, 164, 166, 191, 192, 195, 197–8, and 201.

[23] Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937) joined the Communist Party of Italy at its foundation in 1921. He became a member of the ECCI in the same year as Roy (1922) and attended its meetings till March 1925. Arrested by the Fascist government in November 1926, he was tried in 1928 and condemned to twenty years' imprisonment. In 1931 he suffered serious haemorrhage, was transferred to a clinic (1933), and died in April 1937. Gramsci started writing his Prison Notes in 1929. The first edition of his *Quaderni del Carcere* was published by Enaudi of Turin in six volumes (1948–51); a more scholarly edition in four volumes in 1975 came out under the auspices of the Institut Antonio Gramsci. Most of his writings are now available in English translations. In his *Memoirs* Roy wrote in the late forties that Gramsci's Prison Notes 'may turn out to be the greatest contribution to philosophical thought hitherto made by any communist' (*M. N. Roy's Memoirs*, 1984, rpt. Delhi, p. 275).

[24] *Letters from Jail*, pp. 163–4, p. 182. The house of Malik Verlag was destroyed by the Nazis. Its stock of publications and manuscripts were burnt. The Frankfurt Institute of Social Research escaped that fate by moving abroad. After his break with the Comintern Roy did some of his own research at the Institute. In the late fifties when I spent some stimulating weeks at the Institute as a guest scholar, its director, I think, was Max Horkheimer. Karl Mannheim, Theodor Andorno, Max Horkheimer, Erich Fromm, Karl Wittfogel all either knew Roy personally or were familiar with his works on China and India.

[25] *Letters from Jail*, pp. 19, 35, and 88.

[26] *Selected Works of M. N. Roy, Vol. I*, Introduction. Earlier, shortly after Roy's arrest, Einstein and Henri Barbusse (the French novelist) had publicly protested against his incarceration. E. R., 'M. N. Roy and Indian Communism', *Revolutionary Age*, New York, 28 Nov. 1931.

[27] For quotes and references in the two paragraphs, *Letters*, pp. 15, 26, 31, 53, 81, 10, 25, 56, 77, 90, 102, 135, 161, and 162.

[28] Ibid., pp. 119, 128, and 178.

[29] V. B. Karnik, *M. N. Roy*: *Political Biography*, Bombay 1978, p. 359.

[30] *The World Her Village*: *A Book of Ellen Roy*, ed. Sibanarayan Ray, Calcutta, 1979, pp. 294–5.

[31] Of the very extensive literature on these developments in the thirties, a few of the outstanding ones are: Konrad Heiden, *Der Fuehrer*: *Hitler's Rise to Power*, Boston, 1944; Erych Eych, *A History of the Weimar Republic*, 2 vols., Harvard, 1962–4; A. J. Nicholls, *Weimar and the Rise of Hitler*, London, 1979; G. A. Borghese, *The March of Fascism*, New York, 1937; Franz Borkenau, *World Communism*, Ann Arbor, 1962; E. H. Carr and R. W. Davies, *Foundations of a Planned Economy*, 2 vols., Penguin 1974–6; Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, London, 1961; Jane Degras (Ed), *The Communist International*, Vol. 3, London, 1971.

[32] B. P. Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Madras, 1935; R. C. Majumder, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol. III, Calcutta, 1963; M. Gwyer and A. Appadorai (Eds.) *Speeches and Documents on the Indian Constitution 1921–47*, 2 vols., O. U. P., 1957.

[33] Stephen W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*, Bantam edition, New York, 1989, p. 60.

[34] Hans Reichenbach, *Philosophical Foundations of Quantum Mechanics*, Berkeley and L. A., 1944; also his earlier work *Experience and Prediction*, Chicago, 1938.

Among other books and writings of the period relating to Roy's investigations, L. de Broglie, *Introduction a l'Etude de la Mécanique Ondulatoire*, Paris 1939; A. Einstein, B. Podolsky, N. Rosen, 'Can Quantum Mechanical Description of Physical Reality be Considered Complete?', in *Phys. Rev.* 47 (1935); and N. Bohr, 'Can Quantum Mechanical Description of Physical Reality be Considered Complete?', in *Phys. Rev.* 48 (1935); and E. Schroedinger's contribution to *Naturwissenschaften* 23 (1935).

SELECTED WORKS PART I

Clandestine Publications of the Prison Years (1932–36)

China in Revolt (1932)

Our Task in India (1932)

Whither Congress? A Manifesto (1934)

A Letter to the Communist International (1935)

A Manifesto of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Party of the Indian Working Class (1935)

Letters to the Congress Socialist Party (1934, 1935, 1936)

CHINA IN REVOLT

by

S. K. Vidyarthi

Annas Eight

Vanguard Publishing Co.
41 Hanuman Terrace, Bombay No. 7

Printed at Vikram Printing Press, Girgaon, Bombay, and published at 41 Hanuman Terrace, Grant Road, Bombay, by Mr V. B. Karnik for Vanguard Publishing Company.

Publisher's Note

The author of this book writes with first-hand information of the affairs in China and has therefore been able to solve successfully the puzzle of the Chinese Revolution and Counter-revolution. He describes the various stages through which the revolutionary upheaval passed and shows how in the end it was betrayed by the nationalist bourgeoisie. He gives a searching analysis of the various factors in a Colonial Revolution and describes in detail the real meaning and scope of the tactics of a united anti-imperialist front.

China in Revolt was written in jail in late 1931. As Roy explained in January 1938, a little over a year after his release from prison:

> The following pages contain a summary of the chapters of my book *Revolution and Counter-revolution in China*, setting forth the march of events during the years 1926–7. The bigger book was written in 1930 and was published in German. I left Europe before arrangements for the publication of the English edition were complete. On my return to India, I found many people puzzled with the question of what happened in China. Many wild and fantastic stories were current. I had been present in China for a part of that fateful period. For years previous to that, I had my share in the guidance of the Chinese revolution. Therefore, my name figured rather prominently in the stories about the events in China. In that situation, I thought it necessary to write a short account of what really happened in China. Apart from the purpose of supplying the information, another important purpose is also incidentally served therein: to learn from the experience of China would be of great value for the Indian revolutionaries, particularly the communists. But before I could write the smaller book, I was arrested. Finally, it was written in jail.

What Roy did not mention in this explanatory note is the fact that the handwritten manuscript of the book, copied by another prisoner, to hide the identity of its real author from the jail authorities in case the copy was discovered, was smuggled out of jail and published early in 1932. Since the operation was illegal Roy adopted the pen-name S. K. Vidyarthi (knowledge-seeker) which he also used for some of his clandestine contributions of the period to the Communist Opposition journals in Germany. *China in Revolt* was published by V. B. Karnik who had been recruited by Roy during the brief period of his underground activities in Bombay prior to his arrest in July 1931. It was printed at the Vikram Printing Press, Girgaon, Bombay, and consisted of 80 pages. The book was proscribed immediately by the Government of Bombay under the Press (Emergency) Act of 1931.

China in Revolt has become a very rare book. I had not seen a copy of it when I edited and published the international symposium *M. N. Roy: Philosopher–Revolutionary* in 1959, nor when I brought out a revised and enlarged edition of that symposium in 1984. It was not mentioned in the tentative list of his writings prepared by M. N. Roy and Ellen Roy shortly before his death, nor in Patrick Wilson's 'A Checklist of the Writings of M. N. Roy', revised edn, University of California, 1957. Eventually I secured a photocopy of the book, which is used here. On comparison it became clear that *China in Revolt* provided the text that Roy later published after his release from jail as *My Experience in China* (1st edn. 1938; 2nd edn. 1945). Here he declared his authorship and the circumstances under which the book was written, but did not mention the earlier title nor the experience of smuggling or proscription. Such mention would have jeopardized its publication in 1938 under a new title. However, Roy's authorship of *China in Revolt* has been vouched for by its publisher, the late V. B. Karnik, in his book *M. N. Roy: Political Biography*, p. 380.

Roy made several revisions when he republished *China in Revolt* under the new title *My Experience in China*. The revisions included corrections of printing errors, breaking long paragraphs into shorter ones, transposition of some passages, insertion of three short footnotes, replacement of the 1931 'Foreword' by a 1938 'Introduction', and the addition of about two-and-a-half pages at the end briefly commenting on 'the march of events since these pages were written in 1931'. The fourteen chapters of the original text were recast into ten chapters by putting some of the chapters together into one chapter (thus chapters II and III in *China in Revolt* became chapter II in *My Experience*; chapters VII, VIII, and IX became chapter VI; chapter XI and XII became chapter IX). Besides, the former version was written in the third person to hide the author's identity; in the latter legally published version the narration was naturally told in the first person.

These were rather minor revisions. However, when he published *My Experience in China*, Roy also made a few explanatory additions that were not so minor. Thus in *China in Revolt*, towards the end of chapter X, he wrote: 'At Wuhan, there was a demonstration, but not with the original purpose' (p. 60 in the 1932 edn.). That the original purpose was 'to give the signal for the planned insurrection' was not explicated there. In *My Experience* (Ch. VII, p. 48, 2nd edn.) the 'bitter irony of fate' was spelled out:

> The plan was to declare a one-day general strike on the occasion of the return of the representatives of the Government to the Conference with Feng Yu-Hsiang at the front. All the workers of the three cities were to gather at the meeting to be addressed by the nationalist leaders. From the platform, the representative of the Communist Party was to demand action according to the resolution of the Party, and the nationalist leaders failing to sanction it, to take them prisoners as the signal of the planned insurrection. Ten thousand workers in the nearby Hanyang Arsenal were ready to take possession of it on that signal. But the demonstration turned out to be a welcome to the commanders of the 'victorious' army and the members of the Nationalist government.

Again, in the same chapter of *China in Revolt*, reference was made to 'the alienation of Wang Chin-wei by Borodin's Tang Shen-chi orientation'. No justification was provided here of Wang's complaints against the local communist leadership. In *My Experience* (Ch. VIII, p. 50) this was given by inserting a new passage before the paragraph beginning 'Roy proposed that the plan of reorganizing the Kuo Min Tang' (p. 62, in the 1932 edn). In this new passage Roy explained that Wang had returned to China on the advice of Moscow to place himself at the head of the Wuhan government and was bitter and wavering when he found Borodin and the Chinese Communist leaders backing the 'reactionary feudal militarist Tang Shen-chi'. Roy sympathized with Wang, sent a radio message to Moscow demanding Moscow's reassurance of support to him, and proposed to Wang a plan 'to re-establish his effective leadership of the Wuhan government'.

However, the most important explanatory addition was a longish three-paragraph passage with an extended footnote by Roy explaining why he had shown Moscow's message to Wang and why, in his view, Wang was 'driven into the arms of his reactionary associates by Borodin's opportunist policy' and not because Roy had shown the message to Wang (*My Experience*, pp. 51–3). In the footnote he challenged his malicious calumnists 'to produce one single sentence from any official document of the Communist International bearing out the charge' that he was responsible for the failure of the revolution in China. This passage and footnote do not occur in *China in Revolt*. Over the past two years I have been in correspondence with the Institute of Marxism–Leninism in Moscow. No document has been traced in the Archives in which Roy's role in China was officially condemned by the Comintern.

In the eighties there have been signs of a growing interest in Roy among Chinese scholars, both in China and elsewhere. Dr Huang I-shu of the Department of Chinese Studies, University of Delhi, has prepared and published 'A Report on Chinese Source Materials on M. N. Roy' (1988). It is a particularly exciting report, and I do very much hope that the source material listed and described by her will sooner rather than later be made available in English translation. I find that Roy's articles had been appearing in Chinese in the organ of the Chinese Communist Party *Xiangdao Zhoubao* since 1924, that during his stay in Gangzhou he wrote three articles warning the Party against 'an evident tendency within the national movement of compromising with the internal warlords and international imperialists', that ample contemporary evidence exists in Chinese of Roy–Borodin disagreements in 1927, and that there are now scholars in Communist China who support or sympathize with Roy's Supplementary Theses at the Second Congress.

A special issued on M. N. Roy of the quarterly journal *China Report* (vol 24, no 1, Jan.–March 1988), has published highly informative articles by Associate Professor Chen Fengjun of the Department of International Politics of Peking University, Beijing, on 'M. N. Roy and the Comintern', by Associate Professor Zhang Guangyu of the Department of History of Wuhan University on 'M. N. Roy in Wuhan', and by Dr Feng Chongyi of Nankai University, Tianjin, on 'Roy's Revealing a Secret Comintern Message to Wang Jingwei'. The author of the last article, after examining the records, reached the conclusion that 'there was no betrayal by Roy of the Chinese revolution . . . Roy had sincerely worked for rescuing the Chinese revolution when he was in China' (*China Report*, p. 108). According to Zhang Guangyu, Roy 'made great efforts in salvaging the Chinese resolution. This should be recognized. However, Roy did not fulfil his mission in China . . . The success or failure of a revolution hangs in the balance of the relative strength of the contending classes. At that time the counterrevolutionary forces far exceeded those of the revolutionary forces' (*China Report*, p. 97). Professor Tan Chung at the Centre for East Asian Languages, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, who edited the Special Roy issue of *China Report*, concluded his highly perceptive editorial introduction to the issue by indicating 'the other major aspect of Roy's personality from the perspective of China'. Roy's 'one great contribution to the Chinese Communist Movement', he wrote,

> was the imprint he left behind when he was an insider. His other great contribution to the study of modern Chinese history are the documents and observations left behind by him about the fateful months during which he was in China . . . in his second aspect Roy wore several Chinese hats: of an ex-leader of Comintern representatives in China, of an ex-honorary president of the Wuhan Kuomintang, of a leading light of the Fifth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, of a drafter of important CCP documents and declarations in 1927, of a spiritual leader for launching the agrarian revolution in China anticipating the coming of the Maoist era, of a preserver of valuable CCP historical documents, of an important historian of modern China, of a life-long Indian friend and sympathizer of China, etc. p. 35.

There are altogether four different titles of books on China written by M. N. Roy, besides innumerable articles in various periodicals. The first among these books is the volume in Russian officially published from Moscow–Leningrad in 1929 under the title *Kitaiskaia Revoliutsiia i Kommunisticheskii Internatsional* (The Chinese Revolution and the Communist International) with Roy's name as its author. It consists of speeches and articles by Roy and theses, manifesto, declarations and proclamations of the Chinese Communist Party. This work was not published in any other language, and the Russian edition was withdrawn after Roy's break with the Comintern. Years after Roy's death one copy each was discovered in the University of California Library and the Hoover Library at Stanford University. The Russian text was translated into English by Helen I. Powers and edited with a long introduction by Robert C. North and Xenia J. Eudin under the title *M. N. Roy's Mission to China: The Communist Kuominatang Split of 1927* (University of California Press, 1963). The Hoover Library kindly furnished me with a photocopy of the complete Russian text. Important sections from this work (207 pp. in the Russian edn.) have been included in *Selected Works of M. N. Roy, Vol.* 2.

Roy disagreed with the Comintern's ultra-left policy adopted at the Sixth Congress. After he had published his critical views in the Communist Opposition journals in Germany he was expelled from the Comintern. In 1929–30, during his stay in Germany, the wrote his second book on China which proved to be a Marxist classic, and is now widely recognized by Marxists and non-Marxists alike as a standard work on China. It was published originally in a German translation under the title *Revolution und Konterrevolution in China* (Soziologische Verlaganstalt, 1930, ix+478 pp.). The English Version (689 pp.) was eventually brought out in 1946 from Calcutta and included two additional chapters and an Epilogue briefly touching 'the events during the period since this book was written'.

China in Revolt was the third book, and the fourth was a slightly revised version, *My Experience in China*.* Roy maintained his strong interest in China to the end of his life; he wrote a large number of articles on developments there in his weekly *Independent India* and, later, *The Radical Humanist*, one of the latest being 'New Democratic Movement in China' published on 8 February 1953. His personal recollections of some of the Chinese leaders (Madame Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, Yen Hsi-shan, Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai) are included in the posthumously published volume *Men I Met* (1968; 1981).

The full text of *China in Revolt* is published here; only spelling mistakes in English words have been corrected. Spelling of Chinese names in English transliteration has been retained as given in the 1932 text. Roy's advocacy of a radical programme of agrarian revolution never weakened, although in later years he totally rejected the Marxist view of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

SNR.

Note

*There is slight confusion about the actual title of this book. The outer cover gives the title *My Experience in China*. The title page in the prelims however has it as *My Experiences in China*. I have preferred the former. SNR.

Foreword

During the years 1923 to 1927 the attention of the world was focused upon the events in China. The great imperialist powers were no longer busy with their traditional intrigues and disputes over the prostrate body of the 'Sick Man' of the Far East. They were united in a frantic effort for suppressing the gigantic mass upheaval which challenged the time honoured 'Gunboat Policy' and appeared to be on the verge of clearing away the debris of the fallen celestial Empire. The revolutionary tide kept on rising, until in 1926 it assumed the proportions of a veritable tidal wave. The armies of the feudal worlds equipped and financed by the imperialist powers were swept away like broken reeds. All of a sudden there was in the field a Chinese army which was not a mercenary band of rebels given to pillage and plunder, but could fight and did fight as Chinamen had never fought before, except during the great Taiping Revolt. Not only were the armed forces of reaction impotent to stem the tide of revolution, even foreign battleships and marines failed to cope with the situation, as they had so successfully done ever since the doors of the Manchu Empire were forced open for outlandish merchant–adventurers.

The world was staggered by the unbelievable sight of the Chinese coolie defying the monstrous machines of modern warfare that were rushed to protect foreign life and property against his insolent attack. Who had ever heard of such a thing! The Chinaman wanting to be the master of his own country and demanding the abolition of the dictated treaties, extraterritorial concessions, settlements and other privileges of the foreigners? Still, gigantic revolutionary awakening of the Chinese masses was a stark reality that stared the imperialist world in the face during the eventful years of 1923 to 1927. The events in China became all the more interesting and exciting owing to the appearance of communism on the scene. The imperialist world refused to believe that such a thing could ever happen in China. They ascribed it all to 'Bolshevik intrigues'. Even Sun Yat-sen on the eve of his death was denounced as an agent of Moscow. Yet the last act of his chequered political career was a journey to the North, seeking alliance with the Manchurian warlord, Chang Tso-lin! Lesser luminaries were, of course, nothing but henchmen of the mysterious Bolshevik agent. Borodin, who for a time became one of the most talked-of men of the world; a Chengiz Khan of the twentieth century conquering China. The fact that after a long period of social stagnation aggravated by foreign aggression, China was at last in the throes of the Democratic National Revolution was overshadowed by the fiction of the Bolshevik bogey.

On the other hand, the proletarian world was electrified by the news of the victorious march of communism in China. Imagination distorted things out of all proportions. The Nationalist army was enthusiastically hailed as a sort of 'Red Army', simply because it had come into being with the help of the Russian Soviet Republic, and communists had contributed a good deal to its organization and victories. A revolutionary army undoubtedly it was, for a time, in a certain sense; but it was not an army fighting for communism. Though forged largely by the proletariat, it was a weapon in the hands of an ally who had entered the alliance under the pressure of circumstances and with opportunist motive. Consequently it was a double-edged weapon.

In the autumn of 1927, the tide appeared to turn all of a sudden. The Nationalist army, for a year painted by Communists pink, through not quite red, turned first upon the communists, and then upon the masses of the workers and peasants. There followed a year of massacre unparalleled in modern history. The imperialist world heaved a sigh of relief. The liberal philistines wisely shook their heads and repeated the hackneyed adage, 'Revolution eats her own children'. The Social Democrats gleefully hailed the 'defeat of the Asiatic barbarism of Bolshevism on the banks of the Yang-tse'. The world proletariat was bewildered by the suddenness of things. It was all so much like the proverbial 'Chinese Puzzle'. The communists failed to give an intelligent and convincing explanation of the debacle. It scarcely improved the situation when they passionately denounced as counter-revolutionaries, traitors, etc., the very Nationalist leaders whom for years and months they had applauded as 'revolutionary heroes'. The result was a general loss of interest in the Chinese affairs. Even the fairy-tales of mountainous 'Soviet Republics' and the 'Red Armies', which cannot hold a town of any importance, do not inspire any genuine enthusiasm.

In India the general belief is that the National Revolution has triumphed in China. The Nanking government is looked upon admiringly as a monument of victory. The defeat of the communists and the bloody suppression of the workers and peasants movement are conveniently overlooked. And there certainly are Indian nationalists who reckon those facts as parts of the victory of the Oriental Soul of China over Western materialism. The recent history of China, however, should not be dismissed so lightheartedly. It offers very valuable lessons for the Indians to learn. These lessons have not yet been properly learnt even by those who are anxious to learn them because of the confusion that reigns in the realm of facts. The lessons cannot be learnt, unless the habit of reading facts to suit a predetermined theory is given up. Therefore in the following pages, my main purpose will be to set forth the salient facts in order to explain what really happened in China.

THE AUTHOR

Chapter I

What eventually appeared as a political party with the title of the Kuo Min Tang (literally translated: The People's Party of China) had existed embryonically, in some form or other, ever since the early 90s of the last century. Nevertheless, it was not until 1919 that the Kuo Min Tang sought to live up to its name. Even then, it did not appeal to the people. The post-war mass movement, that did not leave China untouched, made the name of Kuo Min Tang its own, and transformed the old clique of politicians into a political party. We in India also had similar experience at the same historical moment. The National Congress ceased to be the Christmas gathering of amateur politicians and became a mass movement with great revolutionary potentialities.

It is generally but erroneously believed that the Chinese Revolution of 1911 took place under the leadership of the Kuo Min Tang. As a matter of fact, the Manchu Dynasty fell under the unbearable burden of its long-outlived existence. The Manchus simply passed away. They were not overthrown. The immediate cause of their downfall was the rebellion of the Southern Viceroys, themselves feudal–militarist rulers. What functioned as Kuo Min Tang in those days, entered into an unholy alliance with the provincial satraps with no other programme than to bury the dead dynasty. Sun Yet-Sen was a signal failure as the provisional president of the fictitious republic, which was born dead. He voluntarily made room for Yuan Shih-Kai, the representative of the feudal–militarists who had decided to misrule China without the Manchus. The passing dynasty itself nominated Yuan as their successor who would hold the Empire in trust for them. The revolution of 1911 did not change China in any way except to throw her into the ruinous vortex of civil war which began with the fall of Yuan Shih-Kai in 1916, and has not ended as yet. It was not a revolutionary civil war—the new ruthlessly clearing away the debris of the old. It was a ghastly paroxysm of reaction in the throes of a lingering death.

The Revolution of 1911 was tragically miscarried, owing to the absence of a political party with a democratic programme. The Kuo Min Tang was not a political party. It had no programme. Its activities were confined to forming secret military cliques. Its tactics were opportunistic. Ever since 1894, its pioneers had declared war upon the Manchus. All along, until 1924 (when the Kuo Min Tang for the first time adopted a programme), it conducted a quixotic fight against the shadow, leaving the substance alone. It failed to perceive that the Manchus had ceased to rule the country; that foreign imperialism was the real cause of all the evils that ate into the vitals of the Chinese society for more than a century.

At the close of the world war, the Chinese people, for the first time, clearly saw the real danger, that of the disintegration of the country through the rivalry and intrigues of foreign imperialisms which had reduced their sovereignty to an empty shadow. Previously the policy of Sun Yat-Sen and his party had been to enlist the sympathy and support of the 'democratic nations of the West' in the fight against Manchu absolutism, and later, the dictatorship of Yuan-Shih-Kai. They had successively pinned their faith upon America, England, and Japan. They had learnt nothing from the fact that the earlier stages of the democratic Revolution in China—the Great Taiping rebellion and the Boxer Revolt—were suppressed not by the Manchus, but by the united forces of the 'democratic nations of the West'. Had it not been for the support of foreign imperialisms, Manchu absolutism and the reaction it stood for would have been swept away by the progressive forces, germinating in the womb of the Chinese society, and China would have taken her place among the modern nations.

Sun Yat-Sen had started his quixotic fight against the shadow of the Manchu Monarchy already in 1894 when he organized an attempt to capture the city of Canton with the aid of some military officers. Yet, the Boxer Revolt six years later, did not interest him. As regards that elemental anti-imperialist mass upheaval, his views at that time were much the same as of the foreign aggressors. He looked upon the primitive mass revolt as an outburst of fanaticism fomented by the Manchus. This was the most erroneous interpretation of the character and significance of the Boxer Revolt. On the part of imperialism, it was a wilful misinterpretation.

Before the world war, Sun Yat-Sen and his party mostly orientated upon America. During the war they became willing instruments of Japanese imperialism, and propagated the doctrine of Pan-Asianism, according to which Japan had the mission of liberating the Eastern peoples from the domination of the white race. The Versailles Treaty was a rude shock to those who pinned their faith on the Wilsonian liberalism. China was too big a nation to be placed in the category of 'small nationalities'. So, in recompense for her having joined the war on the side of the Allies, her territory was handed over to Japan in order to secure the latter's consent for the plunder in other parts of the world.

The bubble of Wilsonian liberalism having burst, and the significance of Japan's 'liberating mission' being revealed, the Chinese intellectuals at last recognized the reality of the situation. The real movement for national freedom was born. The heroism of the Taipings and the martyrdom of the Boxers had not been in vain. They had been pioneers of the revolutionary democratic movement which, though retarded, could not be crushed by the combined forces of foreign imperialism and native reaction. In 1919, China entered into the last stage of the Democratic Revolution which is not yet complete. The Kuo Min Tang, that made history, and Sun Yat-Sen as a revolutionary leader, are peculiar features in this still-to-be-closed chapter of the annals of modern China.

The history of the Kuo Min Tang, and the biography of its leader are highly instructive for Indian readers, but cannot be dealt with here. It has been done exhaustively in my book, *Revolution and Counter-revolution in China*. (Until now published only in German, I hope the book will be soon available for Indian readers).

A wave of indignation swept over China to protest against the Versailles Treaty which ceded the province of Shantung to Japan. The protest assumed the form of the boycott of Japanese goods. The students and younger intellectuals were in the forefront of the movement which embraced the mass of small traders and artisans and workers in the cities. Economic boycott being a double-edged weapon cannot be abiding. The traders could not hold on indefinitely and the boycott collapsed; but the anti-imperialist spirit was there, only to find different and more effective channels of expression. The need for a political party was felt. The movement must be organized and led. Hallowed by tradition, the Kuo Min Tang appeared on the scene. Sun Yat-Sen was acclaimed to be the leader of the movement.

There was, however, a new leadership in preparation. It was not of an individual, but of a class, still young, unorganized, and but loosely formed. The pioneer of this rising class of the proletariat was Prof. Tu-hsiu, then a professor of science at the National University of Peking which was the intellectual and ideological centre of the new movement.[1] Through his '*Weekly Review*' Chen heralded the rise of the new revolutionary class as the only saviour of China, and called upon the young intellectuals to join hands with the proletariat. Father Confucius had already been dethroned [a] quarter of a century ago by the greatest thinker of modern China, Kang Yu-Wel.[2] Chen gave the national sage an honourable burial, and exposed the reactionary nature of the ideology of bourgeois nationalism, which drew inspiration from the mythical golden age. He put social contents into the sentimentalist ideology of nationalism. He pointed out that the enemies of the Chinese people were foreign imperialism and native feudalism which were mutually helping each other to oppress and exploit the Chinese masses. Thus it was recalled that the basic feature of the nationalist movement was struggle against imperialism, and that this struggle must necessarily coincide with class struggle inside the Chinese society—the struggle of the peasantry against feudalism and the general struggle against its ugly progeny, militarism. This being the case, organization of the workers and peasants, to enforce the demands of these classes must be a condition for a successful struggle against imperialism and its native allies. In short, Chen Tu-hsiu endowed the nationalist movement with a revolutionary ideology, worked out the outlines of its programme, and suggested a scheme of organization. Doing this as a Marxist (Communist), he definitely established the claim of the rising proletariat to the dominating position it was soon to assume in the national democratic revolution.[3] Chen's propaganda greatly influenced the students and younger intellectuals. In 1920, the Communist Party of China was organized.

The movement of 1919 caused the downfall of the pro-Japanese government at Peking; but it could not make any further headway. Kuo Min Tang branches were formed all over the country, particularly in the maritime and the Yangtze provinces. The Kuo Min Tang, as a whole however, still failed to become a political force, giving a definite lead to the mass movement. It was still in the throes of birth. Its leader had not yet seen the light. The old leader of secret society could not easily break away from his narrow outlook, and assume the leadership of a political party.

Meanwhile the proletariat stepped forward. Between 1920–2 there were a series of big strikes in all the industrial centres, which were suppressed by the militarist rulers and their foreign patrons with ruthless barbarity. Bloody reaction reigned supreme, making it impossible for the Communist Party to carry on its activities. It was forced into a precarious illegal illegal existence limited to the Treaty ports—particularly Shanghai. The failure of the nationalists to support the workers in their heroic struggle made the Communists bitter against them. The Communists condemned the Kuo Min Tang as the organ of the nationalist bourgeoisie, and declared that they could have nothing to do with it. Chen Tu-hsiu refused to build upon the foundation he himself had laid. At this stage the Communist International intervened and directed its young section to follow the right road.

In 1922, Sun Yat-Sen had met the representatives of the Russian Soviet Republic, who helped him to see the events of his own country in the proper light. He at last understood the necessity of reorganizing the Kuo Min Tang with such a revolutionary democratic programme as would make it a mass party. But his whole training made it impossible for him to accomplish the great task. He welcomed the cooperation of the Communist Party. The Nationalist Government of Canton helped a strike of the seamen, and allowed the workers to organize themselves in its territories. The policy annoyed its military supporters who, aided by the English from Hongkong, tried to overthrow it in 1923. But the Nationalist Government and the Kuo Min Tang had now found a new foundation. The militarist attack was repulsed and a civilian insurrection organized by the merchant princes was suppressed. This first success of the Nationalist Government paved the way to the reorganization of the Kuo Min Tang.[4]

Notes

[1] Actually Ch'en Tu-hsiu (1879–1942), founder of the Chinese Communist movement, was the Dean of the School of Letters or humanities at the Peking National University. SNR.

[2] Kang Yu-wei, leader of the Reform Movement in the late nineteenth century, founded the Haio Hui (Association for the study of National Power), published, along with the other great modernizer Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao, the periodical *Shih Wu Pao*, and in 1897 wrote the historic 'Appeal to the Emperor on behalf of the Nation. SNR.

[3] General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party since its inception, Ch'en Tu-hsiu was deposed in 1927 under Moscow's instruction, and expelled from the Party in November 1929. From 1932 to 1937 he was in Kuomintang jails. In his last years he became a strong critic of the Stalinist regime. Ch'en's radicalism predated the founding of the Chinese Communist Party. His periodicals, *Hsin Ch'ing-nien* (New Youth) and *Mei-chou p'ing-lun* (Weekly Review) were important organs of the modernization movement in China. SNR.

[4] Comintern representatives like Voitinsky and Maring (Sneevliet) met and discussed matters with Sun Yat-sen in 1920 and 1921, respectively, but a new relation of collaboration and membership was established after the issuance of the Joint declaration by Sun-Yat-sen and the Soviet diplomat Adolf Abramovich Joffe in January 1923. In September 1923, Michael Borodin was sent by the Soviet Union as adviser to Sun to help reorganize the Kuomintang. (Robert C. North, *Chinese Communism*, London, 1966; Robert C. North, *Moscow and the Chinese Communists*, Stanford, 1965; D. J. Jacobs, *Borodin*, Harvard, 1981.) SNR.

Chapter II

The second World Congress of the Communist International in 1920 adopted the theses on the National and Colonial questions. It was thereby resolved that the Communist parties in the capitalist countries should mobilize the proletariat to give every support to the movement of national liberation in the colonial countries. It was further resolved that the Communists in the colonial countries should support the nationalist bourgeoisie in the struggle against imperialism. Acting upon the basic principles of its programme, formulated under the personal guidance of its founder, Lenin, the Communist International called upon the world proletariat to support the Chinese Nationalist Government of Canton, and directed its Chinese section to enter the Kuo Min Tang with the object of using it as a mighty weapon against imperialism. In recommending these tactics, the Communist International had no illusion about the class character of the Kuo Min Tang leadership. But at the moment the anti-imperialist democratic forces were rallying under the banner of the Kuo Min Tang. In order to play the dominating role in the anti-imperialist struggle, the proletariat must be where the forces involved in that struggle were gathering. Being with them, placing themselves always in the forefront of their struggle, the communists were to win the confidence of the nationalist democratic masses. That was the only way to eventual capture of effective leadership. Further, owing to their heterogenous social composition, the anti-imperialist forces could not be mobilized on the platform of communism. At that moment, even the proletariat, and of course the peasantry, could be agitated more easily with nationalist than with class demands. They could not as yet be brought directly within the fold or even under the guidance of the Communist Party, but they could be formed into mass organizations under the popular flag of democratic national revolution. The Kuo Min Tang could be easily transformed into such a common platform for the revolutionary democratic forces, should communists enter it, give it a new programme, and participate in its leadership. In the first stage of political consciousness, the masses, not only the democratic middle class, but also the young proletariat had accepted the leadership of the Kuo Min Tang with acclamation. The influence of mass awakening had precipitated a crisis inside the Kuo Min Tang itself. The 'Old Guard' composed of Confucian intellectuals, ambitious generals, reactionary officials and representatives of the Compradore* bourgeoisie, disapproved of what they thought to be 'Communist deviation' on the part of Sun Yat-Sen and his younger associates. Socially speaking there developed a conflict between the reactionary big bourgeoisie (more reactionary in China, owing to their dependence upon foreign imperialism, on the one hand, and native feudalism, on the other) and the democratic petty bourgeoisie, just in the beginning of the process of radicalization. It is a lesson of history that, left to themselves, the petty bourgeoisie (including the peasantry) cannot outgrow the reactionary influence of the big bourgeoisie and, even in the best circumstances, only become an instrument for creating conditions for the establishment of capitalism. Petty bourgeois radicalism develops into revolutionary Jacobinism only under the pressure of the working class. It was the insurrection of the Parisian proletariat that forced the Jacobins to liberate the revolution from the influence of Girondism, which until then had successfully stood as the bulwark, defending the monarchy and feudal aristocracy.

---

*Wholesalers and bankers acting as a medium of foreign trade export and import. They are a class of parasites organically tied up with imperialist exploitation which in its turn, is based upon pre-capitalist production and feudal plunder of the peasantry.

In 1923 it was clearly the task of the proletariat in China to support the radical petty bourgeoisie and thereby bring about the downfall of the Kuo Min Tang 'Old Guard'. Obviously the petty bourgeoisie, though welcoming the cooperation of the Communists, were not prepared to accept their leadership. The peasant masses, the backbone of democratic revolution, still remained untouched. Even the proletariat would rather follow the Kuo Min Tang than the Communist Party. The most correct tactic for the communists in that situation was clearly to enter the Kuo Min Tang, liberate it from the reactionary influence of Chinese Girondism, and to push the petty bourgeois radicals headed by Sun Yat-Sen further than they would go by themselves.

Under the supervision of the Communist International, its young Chinese section overcame 'the infantile sickness of ultra-leftism' and adopted the correct tactics. The result was quick and remarkable.

Sun Yat-Sen not only definitely discarded his habits of flirtation with the 'democratic nations of the West' but denounced the imperialist policy in China. For the first time in his long chequered political career, only a year before death, he saw things in their proper juxtaposition, the substance before the shadow. He declared war upon imperialism as well as upon its handmaid, Chinese militarism. He hailed the Soviet Republic as the only friend of the Chinese people and boldly advocated a close alliance between the two, for doing which he was branded as a 'Bolshevik agent'.[5] Defying the opposition of his old allies and associates he appointed a Russian communist as his chef adviser.

Note

[5] Sun Yat-sen died on 12 March 1925. On his deathbed he addressed a letter to the Soviet Russian leadership in Moscow:

I leave behind a party which, as I always hoped, will be allied with you in its historical task of liberating China and other suppressed peoples from the yoke of imperialism. My charge to the Kuomintang party before all is that it shall continue to promote the cause of the national revolutionary movement for the emancipation of China, which has been degraded by imperialism into a semi-colonial country. I therefore charge my party to maintain permanent contact with you. [T. C. Woo, *The Kuomintang and the Future of the Chinese Revolution,* London, 1928.]

SNR.

Chapter III

The so-called Reorganization Conference of the Kuo Min Tang took place in 1924. A programme of anti-imperialist struggle, worked out by the Communists, was adopted. There was also adopted a constitution which was to transform the Kuo Min Tang from a loose opportunist combination of heterogenous elements into a political party of mass composition with centralized leadership.[6] Since the programme was not yet clearly revolutionary (the communists were to blame for the defect) and the new constitution was but a scheme, the 'Old Guard' did not oppose them. Their object was to remain at the helm of the party, so that they could manoeuvre for position and control the radical elements. The battle raged on the proposition for admitting the Communists to the membership of the reorganized party. The 'Old Guard' recognized the real foe, and were determined to keep the communists out. They were defeated. The Reorganization Conference gave birth to Chinese Jacobinism. Although represented in the new leadership of the party the 'Old Guard' felt themselves vanquished and withdrew themselves from the party. Shifting their headquarters to Shanghai, where they were favoured with the patronage of foreign imperialism, they disputed the authority of the Central Committee, elected at the Reorganization Conference, and denounced Canton as a hotbed of Bolshevism. In contrast to the 'Red Kuo Min Tang' of Canton they styled themselves the 'White Kuo Min Tang', whose supreme task was to fight Bolshevism. The Chinese masses, including the democratic middle class, definitely prefered the 'Red Kuo Min Tang' not because it was red, but because it carried on an active fight against imperialism, legalized the labour movement in the nationalist territories, and promised the peasantry a 20 per cent reduction of rent.

The hostility of the big bourgeoisie drove the democratic middle class close into an alliance with the communists. In consequence, they found themselves in a predominating position. Under their influence the Nationalist Government of Canton became a revolutionary dictatorship, and repeatedly repulsed the attack of British imperialism delivered from Hongkong. Every worker in Canton was organized, and peasant unions were formed throughout the province of Kwangtung. All these were under communist leadership. A general strike paralysed Hongkong, which was blockaded on the land for the whole year in 1926. The strike committee, which conducted that great fight under the national flag, directed the policy of the Nationalist government; and the strike committee, of course, was under communist leadership. The successful blockade of Hongkong dealt a staggering blow to British trade and, what was still worse, to the prestige of imperialism throughout the Far East. The Chinese coolie came victorious out of the first trial of strength with a mighty foreign power.

The example of 'Red' Canton electrified the whole country. The anti-imperialist movement spread like wildfire. The Shanghai proletariat, led by the communists, was at the forefront. The Kuo Min Tang became so popular, and such large masses rallied under its banner, that it could no longer be suppressed even in provinces ruled by the most reactionary militarists. And the Kuo Min Tang provided the communists an extensive legal field of activities. Being the most active, they came to occupy the very strategical positions in the local branches of the Kuo Min Tang. Thus they came in close contact with the democratic masses, to bring them under proletarian hegemony in the national revolutionary struggle. The splendid result of the tactics of united anti-imperialist front can be summarized in figures.

The Communist Party had been organized in 1920. Nearly four years afterwards in 1924, it had some 800 members recruited mostly from among the students and young intellectuals. The party was illegal, its none too great activities being limited to Shanghai. It had little influence on the nationalist movement. It had absolutely no connection with the peasantry. Its leadership of the proletariat was more nominal than real. Except in Shanghai, it had very little to do with the labour movement which was spontaneous. In two years, since the communists entered the Kuo Min Tang, the membership of their party rose to 54,000; and the young Communist League had over 30,000 members. The Communist Party became the undisputed leader of the Chinese Federation of Labour with over 2 million members; and the peasants' unions, formed throughout the country south of Yangtse, boasted of membership of 7 millions under communist leadership.[7] That was a creditable achievement in two years.

On the other hand Kuo Min Tang became an anti-imperialist mass party counting upon millions of followers. It reported a regular membership of more than a million. For thirty years it had dragged along a precarious nominal existence, engaged in futile military intrigues and discreditable opportunist combinations of reactionary officials. In addition to ambitious generals and disgruntled officials, rich mercantile communities overseas were its source of support. The radical students it had but superficially influenced, for it lacked any systematic ideology or programme of national revolution. It had attempted the baffling task of making a synthesis of American democracy and Confucian feudal patriarchalism. It had never appealed to the masses. Its activities had been mostly abroad among emigrants. In short, as an independent political force, it had counted for little. In every moment of action, its name was lent to any promiscuous combination of professional politicians.

Even after 1919, it had not been able to give any positive political direction and organizational form to the mass movement which accepted its leadership. The alliance with the communists put contents into its empty, but hallowed name. In an incredibly short time it became not only the organ of a mass anti-imperialist struggle as Chinese conditions permitted; but in the years 1924–6, Canton was undoubtedly the base of a great democratic revolutionary movement, and the Kuo Min Tang was the leader of that movement. The Chinese masses could not possibly have been mobilized so quickly in a gigantic revolutionary movement, if a popular nationalist platform were not provided for them. And the Kuo Min Tang could not become this platform except in alliance with the communists. The alliance thus was a historic necessity, marking an essential stage of the Chinese revolution.[8]

Notes

[6] The Kuomintang Constitution of 1924 was written in English by Borodin, checked and approved by Sun, and translated into Chinese by Liao Chung-K'ai. For the English version of the constitution, A. N. Holcombe, *The Chinese Revolution*, Cambridge, 1930. SNR.

[7] Jacques Guillermaz, *A History of the Chinese Communist Party 1921–49*, London, 1972, gives the following membership figures for 1927: CCP—57,963; Youth League—35,000; TU—2,800,000. Ts'ai Ho-Shen claimed that in the spring of 1927 peasants taking part in the uprisings 'numbered not less than 15 million' (*Problemy Kitaia*, No. 1, Moscow, 1927). SNR.

[8] For a left wing Kuomintang account of the development, T. C. Woo, *The Kuomintang and the Future of the Chinese Revolution*, London, 1928. SNR.

Chapter IV

But a permanent principle should not be made of a set of tactics, however successful. Unfortunately this mistake was made by the Chinese communists acting under the guidance of their Russian advisers. The mistake was detected when it was too late to rectify it, and it proved to be fatal.

Once the very necessary anti-imperialist, revolutionary democratic alliance was established, the communists who had previously opposed it, soon made a fetish of it. In their eyes, the means appeared to be the end, and the result of such a mal-juxtaposition of things was bound to be the sacrifice of the real end. The object of the alliance was mobilization and organization of the masses for a revolutionary struggle not only against foreign imperialism, but also against the forces of native reaction which provided, so to say, foreign imperialism with a social basis. Nationalist slogans and popular nationalist flag had to be used for the purpose, because of the social and political conditions under which the revolution was taking place. But class antagonism is the basis of all revolutionary struggles. This is clear to the communists. When the Chinese communists were advised to enter the Kuo Min Tang with a very specific object, they were not expected to lose sight of the basic fact of the situation.

The cumulative effects of the imperialist, primitive, capitalist feudal and patriarchal forms of exploitation were driving the great majority of the Chinese people in revolt which, in its initial stage, was directed towards foreign imperialism, because this stood at the summit of the Chinese social pyramid. But the growth of the revolt, owing to its very nature, was bound to accentuate class antagonism inside the Chinese society. The movement for national freedom could not develop without inevitably sharpening class struggle. As a matter of fact, sharpening of the class struggle was the mighty lever to develop the national consciousness of the masses. The entire national economy of a colonial country (China is a colony in spite of her sham political independence) being subjected to imperialist exploitation, the smallest demands of the workers (about wages, condition of labour, etc.), peasants (about rent, tenure, etc.), and the urban petty bourgeoisie (about house rent, taxes, prices, etc.) bring them all up against the common enemy. Conversely, the movement for national liberation promoted in this way (there is no other) assumes the character of democratic revolution; for it develops by attacking the native parasitic classes (that is, those not contributing anything to production, but actually injuring it) which exist as agencies of colonial exploitation. In order to be effective, the anti-imperialist movement in China (as in any colonial country) had to win the support of the peasantry. Now, the peasant masses bear the brunt of colonial exploitation, but it affects them indirectly. The multifarious native agencies of exploitation, present on the spot, are naturally more real to the peasants. Therefore they could not be moved by the slogans against unequal treaties, concessions, extraterritoriality, etc. which directly affected the urban population. The slogans which could agitate the peasantry must be such as were not agreeable for the rural, exploiting classes. In the programme adopted at the Reorganization Conference, the Kuo Min Tang had promised the peasantry 20 per cent reduction of land rent. The communists carried that message to the villagers. The peasants eagerly listened, and enthusiastically rallied under the Kuo Min Tang flag with the cry—'Down with Imperialism'. The nationalist government, however, was not prepared to make good the Kuo Min Tang promise. Peasant unions were formed practically in all the villages in the province of Kwangtung to which the jurisdiction of the Nationalist government was limited in 1925. The peasantry were mobilized in mass formation to strike at the root of reaction. Their unions were supported by other exploited elements of the countryside. So they represented the framework of a democratic state. They were quite fit to take over the government of the village. But that would imply suppression of the resistance that was sure to come from the landlords and their henchmen. Immediately upon entering the villages, the anti-imperialist movement clarified its social content. Its revolutionary democratic essence became palpable.

The situation in the villages reflected upon the leading circle of the Kuo Min Tang and the Nationalist government as a new crisis. The leaders of Chinese Girondism[9] had left the Kuo Min Tang on its reorganization; but their agents remained inside the higher circle of the reorganized party. They condemned the communists for fomenting schism in the nationalist rank. They were fighting for their life. Their social base in the village was threatened by the revolutionary awakening of the rural masses. The left wing, which controlled the situation, wavered. In order to temporize, some of the rabid right wing leaders were sent away from Canton. They were afraid of driving the left wing back into an alliance with the Girondists. But there was no ground for the fear. Without the support of the workers, the Nationalist government could not last a day. Imperialism was waiting on the fence to take revenge. The Kuo Min Tang could not retrace the steps it had taken towards Jacobinism, unless time for the purpose was available. The mistake on the part of the communists gave it the breathing space.

The communists were terrified by the spectre of the disruption of the alliance with the Kuo Min Tang. Less than two years ago, Chen Tu-Hsiu, as a propagandist, had maintained that the communists should have nothing to do with Kuo Min Tang; that an alliance between the revolutionary proletariat and the nationalist bourgeoisie was a deviation from the principles of Communism.[10] Now, he would not allow the peasant to attack patriarchal feudalism and free rural economy from parasitic pre-capitalist exploitation. He developed the novel theory of 'broadening, not deepening the revolution'. He maintained that as long as the revolution remained in the anti-imperialist stage, the class struggle in the village should not be sharpened, for that would weaken the nationalist front.

The theory was a clear negation of the object with which the anti-imperialist united front had been formed. The object was to mobilize larger and larger masses in a democratic revolutionary struggle, and to force the radical petty-bourgeoisie to go further on the revolutionary way than they would go by themselves. When the petty bourgeois radicals wavered, it was for the communists to act with resoluteness. That was why they were there. Had the communists courageously led the peasants in the impending attack upon rural reaction, the nationalist government could not have stopped them. It had no force for that. It had defeated militarists' intrigues, and dealt a severe blow to imperialist prestige with the support and active help of the workers, organized and led by the communists. So it would have been forced to sanction the revolutionary action of the peasantry, had it been confronted with an accomplished fact. That is how petty bourgeois radicalism acts—always under pressure. Remove or relax the pressure, and it instantly loses its sting, and reverts under the reactionary influence of the big bourgeoisie. During the French Revolution, the Jacobin convention declared the abolition of feudalism, only after the peasants had begun with the job in right earnest.

The Kuo Min Tang radicals and their nationalist government would surely have sanctioned the victorious action of the peasantry, of course not from any revolutionary conviction. They would have done so out of convenience. By sanctioning an act accomplished by the peasantry in their own territory, they would have won the acclamation of the peasant masses throughout the county. A year afterwards, when the nationalist army marched northwards, the support of the peasantry carried it from victory to victory. How much greater and more abiding would have been the victory had the nationalist army carried the message of an accomplished agrarian revolution at its base. The communists having failed in the purpose for which they had entered the Kuo Min Tang, incipient Jacobinism began to lose ground.[11] Reaction, spared by the mistake of the communists, did not waste time. It assumed offensive, and claimed [as] its first victim Liao Chung-hai, the Marat of the Chinese Revolution.[12] Then the tide turned definitely. The agents of the right wing asserted themselves. They attacked the Communists who were removed from the strategic positions. The peasant unions were assailed and destroyed everywhere. To decompose the radical wing entirely, and to liquidate the half-hearted revolutionary policy, inaugurated by the Reorganization Conference a year and half ago, the Chinese Robespiere Wang Chin-wei went, though not to guillotine to forced exile. Sun Yat-Sen had appointed him his successor to carry on the policy of friendship with the Soviet Republic, co-operation with the Communists, and support of the workers' and peasants' demands.

Notes

[9] During the French revolution, the Girondin, drawn largely from the professional and mercantile classes, dominated the Convention initially, but in June 1793 they were displaced by the Jacobins who were much more radical and ruthless. SNR.

[10] For Ch'en Tu-hsiu's early opposition to the Kuomintang, Ken'ichi Hatano, *History of the Chinese Communist Party*, Tokyo, 1939. Under pressure from Borodin Ch'en changed his view. After his expulsion from the CCP, Ch'en published an open 'Letter to the Comrades' (Dec. 1929) explaining his conduct under pressure and protesting against his expulsion. SNR.

[11] In the course of his polemics with his critics in the Social Democratic movement, Lenin repeatedly referred to 'historical parallels with the era of the Great French Revolution', and proclaimed that in the contemporary context *revolutionary* Social Democracy or bolshevism was twentieth century Jacobinism (Lenin, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, 1904).

Lenin's view was attacked at that time by Trotsky 'as a dull caricature of the tragic intransigence of Jacobinism' (*Our Political Task*, 1904). In Roy's writings of the Marxist period, there is frequent use of the term 'Jacobinism' in its Leninist interpretation. SNR.

[12] Liao Chung-hai or Chung-k'ai was a very close associate of Sun Yat-sen. He translated into Chinese the Kuomintang Constitution that had been drafted in English by Borodin. On 20 August 1924 he was assassinated, most probably by a member of the Kuomintang right wing. SNR.

Chapter V

The mistake of making a principle out of a policy was not given up even after the bitter experience of 1925. It was continued throughout the next year, and finally led to the disastrous defeat in 1927. At the end all the blame was laid upon the leaders of the Communist Party of China. After the defeat, the International directed the Chinese Party to take such a sharp turn to the other extreme[13] as appeared to be a repudiation of the revolutionary policy, of the proletariat making a fighting alliance with the nationalist bourgeoisie in the struggle against imperialism—the policy recommended in 1923 by the same International in accordance with its fundamental principles, formulated by the second world Congress under the personal guidance of Lenin.

The remarkable achievement until 1925 and afterwards throughout the following year, notwithstanding the mistakes committed in applying it, proved the absolute correctness of the policy. The defeat was due, among other causes, to the opportunist interpretation of a revolutionary policy. The very correct and largely successful policy ultimately failed to realize its object because of the mistakes committed in its application. And it is a wilful misreading of history to shove the entire responsibility upon the leaders of the Communist Party of China.[14]

The C. P. of China is a section of the International. Being a young party, thrown in the midst of a gigantic revolutionary struggle, it received the special attention of the International leadership, and this, owing to peculiar circumstances, was exercised through the Russian Party. Ever since 1923, the C. P. of China had been under Russian guidance. Its leading cadre was trained by Russian communists. The opportunist deviations, which led to the disaster of 1927, took place not at the instance of the Chinese communists but their Russian friends. Besides, when it is found that the leaders of a particular section of a centralized world party like the Communist International, have systematically deviated from the correct line over a whole period of time, the responsibility for the same must be laid at the door of the International leadership. This has either approved of the deviation or proved itself incapable for its function. As a matter of fact the International leadership actually available to the C. P. of China, was incapable and defective. It put a mechanical and vulgar interpretation upon the revolutionary policy of united anti-imperialist front, and was therefore responsible for the opportunist deviation on the part of the C. P. of China.

Under the given conditions, it was inevitable that the International had to exercise its leadership in China through the Russian Party. There was nothing objectionable in the arrangement. The Russian Party was bound to be the leader of the International in the earlier stages of the latter's history. It was all the more so as regards Eastern countries, owing to geographical and political reasons. But the misfortune was that actual leadership devolved upon the youthful members of the Russian Party—mostly of post-revolutionary growth. The talent of the party was occupied at home and taken up with the western affairs of the International. The young inexperienced Russian communists, however, carried with them the imposing authority of the leading Party of the International as well as of the Proletarian State. The Chinese communists, on the other hand, themselves were too young and inexperienced to be critical. The authority of the representatives of the only party in power appeared incontestable and infallible for them. In these circumstances, the actual leadership of the C. P. of China, ever since 1923, was, as a matter of fact, vested in a few youthful Russians. They all meant very well—full of revolutionary ardour and idealism; but that was not enough. They lacked sufficient ideological training, intellectual independence, and political experience. Consequently, with all their goodwill and youthful enthusiasm, they were not fit to perform the function assumed by them.

Another evil result of the arrangement was that the C. P. of China grew as a spoon-fed child. It did not learn to do its own thinking. The standard of qualification was judged by the ability to imitate the Russians mechanically. To learn from the rich experience of the great Russian Revolution and from the history of the Bolshevik Party was very necessary for the young Communists of China. But it was equally necessary to understand how to apply the lessons effectively to the situation of their country. This required original thinking, and the courage of criticism, which could not thrive in the atmosphere of a hothouse.

So, upon the adoption of the correct policy of revolutionary united anti-imperialist front, the C. P. of China grew with amazing rapidity. But its internal maturity lagged far behind its outer growth. In a very short time it found itself in the proud position of the leader of a great revolutionary mass movement; but unfortunately it was not equipped to occupy the position creditably.

Since 1923, the Russian Communists found themselves in an exceedingly delicate situation in China. Automatically they represented two bodies, the respective interests of which appeared to conflict in China. As members of the Russian Communist Party, they represented the International, and as citizens, the Soviet Republic. There is no antagonism between the two; on the contrary, the latter is the first conquest of the former, its base of operation. To strengthen it is a condition for further victory of the International Proletariat Hair: to defend it under any condition is the revolutionary duty of the class-conscious workers of the world, and particularly of the communists. Still, to combine the functions of the two is sometimes a rather difficult and delicate task. Such a task the Russians had to face in China. Unfortunately, only inferior and indifferent members of the Russian Party were available for a task which required the very best of Bolshevism—clear revolutionary foresight, firm ideology, unshaken conviction, indomitable resolution, unerring sense of reality, ruthless regard for facts, consistent policy, and tactical elasticity.

The Soviet Republic had entered into a close alliance with the Nationalist Government of Canton. Even previous to that it had established diplomatic relations with the reactionary government of Peking, and signed with it treaties of agreements abandoning the privileges acquired forcibly by Czarism. So, its attitude was friendly not only towards the nationalist bourgeoisie, but even to the feudal militarists. As regards the latter, the attitude appeared to be inexplicable, and was criticized as unprincipled opportunism by ultra-left communists. It was, however, quite explicable, being dictated by two considerations. Firstly, to indicate its friendship for the Chinese people by establishing friendly relations with their central government, however nominal. Secondly, to prevent the Peking Government from becoming an instrument of international imperialism in an attack upon the Soviet Republic, to prevent Chine from becoming the base for such an attack. This second strategical consideration dictated also the policy of giving rather excessive material help not only to the nationalist bourgeoisie, but also to the so-called left militarists, Feng Yu-hsiang for example. The friendship of these people was mercenary. Should the Soviet Republic not pay for it liberally, it was likely to be transferred to other quarters; and antagonism of these forces would transform China into a very dangerous base of operations against the Workers' Republic.

Liberal Soviet support to the nationalist bourgeoisie and friendly relations with the feudal militarists interfered with the correct application of the revolutionary communist policy of the united anti-imperialist front. The young Russians, entrusted with the task of guiding the C. P. of China, did not know where to draw the line. They confounded the diplomatic manoeuvres of the Soviet Republic with the revolutionary policy of the Communist International. In consequence, there developed with them the theory: not only the revolutionary bourgeoisie (the entire class) but even the so-called left militarists were revolutionary factors, which must be supported unconditionally. The corollary to this theory was that the proletariat should play the second fiddle in the democratic anti-imperialist revolution, which would be accomplished by the nationalist bourgeoisie. The tactical outcome of this comprehensive theoretical system was the anxiety to preserve at all costs the proletarian alliance not only with the national bourgeoisie, but also with the 'left militarists'.

Although they were themselves the most active elements in the anti-imperialist movement, organizers of the millions of workers and peasants, the Communists, nevertheless, became politically a subservient adjunct to the Kuo Min Tang, a faithful watchdog of the Nationalist government, which received more kicks than caresses for its valuable services.

This woeful perversion of a revolutionary policy was accomplished, thanks to the pernicious practice of unintelligent respect for authority. For three fateful years, the Russian leaders of the Communist Party of China invoked the ghost of Lenin to justify their miscarriage of the correct policy, formulated by the great revolutionary leader. The standard of Leninist orthodoxy was not the ability to understand it in its essentials and to elaborate the policy, only sketched by Lenin. It was to quote him, and that not even always with any regard for accuracy. Lenin himself would surely move in the grave, if he knew that his orthodox disciples were making of him a prophet, who has said the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

In 1920 the second World Congress of the Communist International adopted the theses on the Colonial and National question. At that time it had no direct knowledge of the situation in the colonial countries, had no definite revolutionary experience acquired in that vast field. Consequently it was not possible to do more than sketch the general outlines of the programme and principles for the Communists to follow there. In the beginning, Lenin appeared to exaggerate somewhat the revolutionary role of the nationalist bourgeoisie. Approaching the problem theoretically, he thought that the bourgeoisie in the colonial countries like India and China were bound to play the same revolutionary role as was played in the past by their kind in Europe. Those, having more intimate knowledge of the relation of classes in those countries and experience of the political movement there, disagreed with Lenin. He thereupon modified his views. In course of the discussion he taunted those disagreeing with him [M. N. Roy was the leading spokesman of the opposing view] as 'left communists', underestimating the importance of the nationalist bourgeoisie. The controversy was not definitely settled. Agreement however was reached on general principles that the communist International should support the struggle of the colonial people for national freedom, and that this could be most effectively done through the revolutionary organizations of the oppressed and exploited masses in the colonial countries. The attitude towards the nationalist bourgeoisie was thus not definitely defined. They were to be supported as part of colonial people, but the form and extent of the support were to be determined with the help of subsequent experience, in the light of their position in the struggle for national freedom.[15]

Later on, the policy of the Chinese Communists entering the Kuo Min Tang was recommended, not with the object of supporting the nationalist bourgeoisie on principle, but as a most effective means to develop anti-imperialist revolutionary mass movement. The alliance with the Kuo Min Tang was not an end by itself. It was a means to the end, which was to develop the democratic national revolutionary struggle. Obviously the Communist attitude towards the alliance was to be elastic. Should the alliance stand in the way of the revolutionary mobilization of the masses, it could not be of any more use. But precisely this essence of the policy of united front was not grasped by the leaders of the Communist Party of China and also by their Russian advisers as pointed out above. The alliance was interpreted by them as a recognition of the revolutionary role of the nationalist bourgeoisie. The criticism of this opportunist application of revolutionary policy was combated as an attempt to revise Leninism, M. N. Roy being the principal object of attack. Had not Lenin said that the nationalist bourgeoisie were a revolutionary force to be supported by the Communists and condemned his opponents, particularly Roy, as 'left communists'? There should be no independent examination of the problem. Authority settled the issue raised by the realities of a revolutionary struggle. But Lenin never laid down any such categorical law. He expressed his views, defended them, but was prepared to modify them in view of the insufficiency of the materials at hand.[16]

Necessary diplomatic manoeuvres (which occasionally were carried a bit too far) in the interests of the Soviet Republic, influenced the policy of the C. P. of China. It came to lay more stock on military combinations than on mass struggle. It order to win the confidence of one faction, it omitted to press the class demands of the workers and peasants. While helping the formation of the Nationalist army (which eventually became a formidable weapon in the hands of the counterrevolutionary bourgeoisie), the Communists neglected the supreme necessity of arming the masses. In order not to disturb the Kuo Min Tang and for securing the adhesion of the so-called left-militarists, the Communists restrained the peasants from attacking feudalism. The perverse theory of broadening the revolution before deepening it ran rampant. Huge masses were mobilized under Communist leadership. They helped the Nationalist army to victory and the bourgeoisie to power, but themselves were brutally suppressed in the end, because they had not been prepared for the fierce class struggle that developed in the midst of the anti-imperialist movement. The Chinese communist leaders acted as they were taught by their Russian mentors. They were given more to diplomacy than to mass action.

Notes

[13] After the debacle of the Chinese communists in July 1927, the CCP was forced to launch the Nanchang uprising in August 1927 and the Canton uprising in December 1927. They were directed respectively by Besso Lominadze and Heinz Neumann, both sent as Comintern representatives by Stalin. Both uprisings were totally crushed. Brandt, Schwartz, and Fairbank, *A Documentary History of Chinese Communism*, Harvard, 1952; J. Guillermaz, 'The Nanchang Uprising', *The China Quarterly,* July–Sept. 1962. SNR.

[14] On 7 August 1927, at a secretly held emergency conference called by the Comintern representative Lominadze, Ch'en Tu-hsiu was dismissed from the Party's General Secretaryship. The ECCI accused the CP of sabotaging its instructions and held the CCP to be fully responsible for the disasters of 1927. Jane Degras, *The Communist International*, Vol. II, pp. 394–5. SNR.

[15] For Lenin's and Roy's theses at the Second Congress, see *Selected Works of M. N. Roy*, Vol. I, 1987, pp. 164–78; also *Der Zweite Kongress der K. I., Protokoll*, Hamburg, 1921. SNR.

[16] In reply to Marchulin's question, 'why were Roy's Supplementary Theses needed', Stalin categorically pointed out that they were needed 'for singling out from the backward colonies of the East such countries as China and India'. Lenin drafted his theses 'long before the representatives from the colonial countries had arrived'. *Derevensky Kommunist* No 10, 15 May 1927. J. Stalin, *On the Chinese Revolution*, Calcutta, 1975, pp. 32–4. SNR.

Chapter VI

The short-lived Chinese Jacobinism was definitely overthrown by the counter-revolutionary *coup d'état* of March 1926. That was an ominous signal indicating which way the political wind was blowing. The radical left wing of the Kuo Min Tang was overwhelmed by the nationalist military leaders. Chiang Kai-shek obviously acted as the agent of the big bourgeoisie. Having gained control of the nationalist government by his *coup d'état*, Chiang Kai-shek began preparation for an open attack upon the revolutionary mass movement, which had alarmed the nationalist bourgeoisie, no less than foreign imperialism and native feudalism. At Canton the would-be Chinese Napoleon did not feel himself at home. He planned to shift the seat of the nationalist government to a place, where it could, freed from the influence of the revolutionary working class, go entirely over to the bourgeoisie, and seek the patronage of imperialism. Besides, he wanted to increase his military strength in preparation for the great struggle ahead. In short, the big bourgeoisie, acting through agents, who still professed to follow the policy of Sun Yat-sen, went over the offensive, with the object of wresting from the proletariat the hegemony in the struggle for national liberation. Their success would mean defeat of the democratic revolution without which national liberation was not possible. Indeed, they would rather make peace with imperialism than tolerate the maturing revolution. They were organically connected with the pre-capitalist social conditions which were threatened by the democratic revolution.

A few months after his *coup d'état* Chiang Kai-shek began his military campaign towards the north. The Communists wholeheartedly supported the North Expedition and undertook the task of mobilizing the masses to support it. The nationalist army was trained by Russian officers, equipped with Russian arms and financed largely with Russian money. As a matter of fact, without the generous help of the Soviet Republic, the North Expedition of Chiang Kai-shek could not have taken place and without the vanguard preparations of the Communists it could not have so easily vanquished the opposing forces. The spectacular victory, that made the Cantonese army world famous in 1926–7, was won more by the revolutionary workers and peasants than by the troops. The military campaign itself was planned and actually conducted by a Russian Communist (an ex-metal worker) Galen with his staff of Russian officers. The nationalist hero Chiang Kai-shek was but the figurehead.

To help and support the campaign was a correct policy, because it provided the Communists with a much wider field of action and the opportunity to lead the peasant masses actually in the agrarian revolution throughout the Southern provinces. That is, the Communists could, if they dared, utilize the North Expedition for turning tables against the bourgeoisie, who had planned it to aggrandize themselves. But the Communists again failed while applying a correct policy to action. Instead of going courageously to the offensive in order to forestall the counter-revolutionary plan of the bourgeoisie, they allowed the bourgeoisie to acquire formidable military strength, which was presently turned upon the revolutionary masses. The fatal mistake was again due to the false theory of the revolutionary role of the nationalist bourgeoisie and the anxiety to preserve the alliance with the Kuo Min Tang at all cost. It was really tragic to talk of the revolutionary role of the nationalist bourgeoisie, just when they were opening attack upon the revolution, and to defend the alliance with the Kuo Min Tang, when the Kuo Min Tang was preparing to break the alliance.

For every 10 guns supplied to the army of Chiang Kai-shek not even one was given to the workers. Communists, working in the nationalist army as political commissars, acted as members of the Kuo Min Tang and did not permit any propaganda to make the soldiers class-conscious, on the ground that, that would decompose the army. Caught between the advancing nationalist army in the front and the insurgent peasantry in the rear, the northern troops ran away throwing down their guns. These were not seized by the Communists and given to the peasants, thus creating a revolutionary army, capturing power in the villages and destroying feudalism. The nationalist army was hailed by the peasants as their liberator, but the troops, who were themselves peasants, were not called upon to support the demands of the peasantry. In short, the Communists utterly neglected to entrench themselves while the field was free for them.

The theory determining these blunderous tactics was to broaden the revolution before deepening it. Before the attack upon feudalism began the peasants must be organized. The nationalist army should be helped to bring all the Southern provinces under its control. That would provide the Communists with the freedom to organize the peasantry in all those provinces. Then it would be so very easy to overthrow feudalism. This way of reasoning indicated a naïve faith in the revolutionary character of the nationalist bourgeoisie. It was assumed that they also wanted destruction of feudalism. In the light of cruel facts taking place ever since 1925, there was however no ground for this assumption. It was clear that the nationalist bourgeoisie was hostile to an agrarian revolution and were preparing to suppress it with the aid of imperialism, if necessary. During the North Expedition, one after another, feudal militarists joined the nationalist army, transforming it into a formidable weapon of counter-revolution.

The stormy development of the revolution, as evidenced by the spectacular march of the nationalist army, attracted the attention of the entire Communist International to the Chinese question. It was immediately felt that there was something amiss. Blunders committed by the leading men on the spot were detected. The extension of the nationalist territories up to the Yangtse, the occupation of important cities in Central China, the imminent fall of Shanghai itself, a new schism in the leadership of the Kuo Min Tang, the abnormal inflation of the nationalist army through the adhesion of feudal militarists, tremendous expansion of the mass movement, and finally the insurrection of the Shanghai proletariat—all these factors, among many others, marked the closing stages in the development of the Chinese revolution. The time arrived for a recasting of Communist policy. The relation of classes inside the nationalist ranks had definitely changed. Class-struggle had sharpened. Consequently the social basis of the revolution must shift and tactics and strategy should be readjusted accordingly. The questions that prominently rose out of the situation were: Could the National Democratic Revolution develop further under the leadership of the bourgeoisie? Could the class basis of the anti-imperialist united front remain as broad as before? How could the petty bourgeoisie be detached from the influence of the big bourgeoisie? What should be the social basis and form of the nationalist state? Would the National Revolution cease to be democratic because of the imminent defection of the bourgeoisie? Should the agrarian revolution be still delayed for the sake of an alliance, which the bourgeoisie themselves were on the point of breaking?

These questions were answered in the comprehensive theses adopted by a session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International in November 1926.[17] The substance of the theses was that the revolution still remained in the democratic stage and therefore must have a block of classes for its social basis; that this block was bound to narrow down soon to the proletariat, peasantry, and urban petty bourgeoisie; that agrarian revolution was on the order of the day; that the proletariat must prepare to take the offensive; and that the Communists should enter into the nationalist government of Wuhan (left Kuo Min Tang) to transform it into a democratic dictatorship.

In adopting the new resolution, the International, on the one hand, rejected the view of the ultra-left led by Trotsky, which demanded an immediate break with the Kuo Min Tang and advocated the slogan of the Soviet; on the other hand, it repudiated the right opportunism of those who had until then been responsible for the leadership of the C. P. of China. Stalin himself was reluctant to agree with the demand for the 'Nationalization of Land' formulated in the resolution. He, however, gave in. On his insistence Roy left for China as the representative of the International to execute the new policy which was framed largely at his instance. It was also generally known that he had all along criticized the mess made in China. Now he was sent to clear the mess at the eleventh hour.

Note

[17] For English translation of the text of the 'Theses on the Chinese Situation' adopted by the Seventh Enlarged Session of the ECCI (22 Nov.–16 Dec. 1926), see *Selected Works of M. N. Roy, Vol. II*, pp. 586–600. For the Russian text *Puti Mirovoi Revoliutsii*, Moscow, 1927, vol II, pp. 435–49. SNR.

Chapter VII

The victory of the Nationalist Army, on the one hand, sharpened the class struggle in the countryside, placing the basic issue of the democratic revolution, namely, the agrarian question, on the order of the day; and on the other hand, it accentuated the factional struggle inside the Kuo Min Tang, to the extent of endangering its very existence. While taking a very hesitating attitude towards the agrarian question, which involved the overwhelming majority of the people, the Communist leaders were more concerned with the internal struggles of the Kuo Min Tang. Even this issue of the acute revolutionary situation they approached from a wrong point of view. There were two sets of antagonism developing inside the Kuo Min Tang: one threatened to split it horizontally, along the line of divergent interests of the various groups of the bourgeoisie, the other desired to split it vertically. To sharpen the first set of antagonism should have obviously been the object of communist tactics in that situation. The great bulk of the membership of the Kuo Min Tang were recruited from the oppressed and exploited classes. The interest of these demanded the development of the revolution towards the final overthrow of imperialist power, and complete destruction of feudalism. The leadership represented not only the bourgeoisie (bankers, industrialists, and big merchants), but also the landlords and the village gentry. A bold insistence upon the speedy enforcement of the programme of democratic revolution, particularly the solution of the agrarian and kindred problems (grain monopoly, arbitrary taxation, forced labour, internal customs, etc.) would surely widen the cleavage between the leadership and the following of the Kuo Min Tang. The relation of classes in the anti-imperialist democratic revolution would change. The proletariat would have the hegemony in that struggle. The big bourgeoisie would be definitely ousted from the leadership of the nationalist movement. The social basis of the revolution would be narrowed down to a more homogeneous alliance of classes, that of the proletariat, peasantry, and urban bourgeoisie. This alliance could still take place on the platform of the democratic national revolution, and under the popular flag of the Kuo Min Tang; but the effective leadership would pass on to the Communist Party.

Still terrified with the imaginary spectre of break with the Kuo Min Tang, the Communist leaders under the domination of their Russian mentor, Michael Borodin, entirely failed to perceive the perspective of the situation. They stubbornly resisted the new policy recommended by the International and followed Borodin in the old path of opportunism.

In that critical moment, when everything depended upon quick and decisive action, the International Headquarters failed to back up decisively M. N. Roy, its representative on the spot. Though his political line was somewhat half-heartedly endorsed, Borodin, with his powerful Russian apparatus and vast material resources, was left the real master of the situation. The Fifth Congress of the Communist Party reluctantly accepted the policy recommended by the International. It adopted Roy's resolutions on the political situation and the all important agrarian question. But the resolutions remained on paper. They were not enforced. In gross contrast to the revolutionary resolutions adopted at its Congress, the Party acted in a way which amounted to a betrayal not only of the peasantry but even of the proletariat.

The leaders of the C. P. of China had been trained in the school of opportunism. They had been taught to make a fetish of the alliance with the Kuo Min Tang. They had imbibed the theory that the democratic national revolution must take place under the leadership of the bourgeoisie. For two years, they had acted on these lines, approved by the International, under the direct guidance of those who appeared to be its accredited representatives. Opportunism had became a habit, a tradition with them, and they had been made to acquire this habit by 'Bolshevik authority', who appeared to incorporate the experience of the great Russian revolution and freely quoted Lenin. So, the Chinese Communist leaders were naturally unable to grasp the new policy, which meant a sudden repudiation of the line followed until then. It appeared to them like heresy. They had not been trained for such revolutionary mass action as was recommended. They were used to carry on the work of agitation, propaganda, and even organization; but action was the monopoly of the Kuo Min Tang and the Nationalist Government. What was not sanctioned by these leading authorities could not and should not be done; to do any such thing would be tampering with the alliance. For example, the party Congress had adopted the resolution that the offensive must be taken in the agrarian field; that the peasants should be led in an attack upon feudalism; that big estates should be confiscated by the peasant unions, which should forthwith assume the functions of government in the village.[18] Even after this resolution had been passed, the leader of the party, Ch'en Tu-hsiu, acting under the advice of Borodin, telegraphed to Moscow opposing the policy.[18] His arguments were: that the officers of the Nationalist Army all hailed from the landowning class; they disapproved of the programme of agrarian revolution; and that the suggested offensive in the villages would turn the army against the Nationalist Government. This morbid concern for the attitude of the military officers overlooked the soldiers, who were reecruited from the peasantry and would have surely welcomed an agrarian revolution. Besides, the military officers were not marking time. They were already on the offensive, brutally suppressing the peasant movement, and preparing an insurrection against the Nationalist Government of Wuhan, unless this latter openly attacked the Communists.

Note

[18] There were strong policy differences both in the Comintern and the Chinese Party leaderships. According to Treint who was in 1927 a member of the Chinese subcommittee of the ECCI, Bukharin maintained in the subcommittee that 'if we do not curb the agrarian movement [in China], we will lose our left allies and it will become impossible to win a majority in the Kuomintang'. He was backed by Ercoli [Togliatti] and opposed by Treint. The decision was taken by Stalin who sent 'instructions to Borodin to oppose the confiscation and division of land belonging to members of the Kuomintang'. A. Treint, '*Compte Rendu Analytique de la Petite Commission Chinoise*', Mai 1927.

For Roy's position in 1927 and accounts left by his CCP colleagues besides Roy's own writings, *see* Li Lisan, 'Report on Party History', 1930; Cai Hesen, *Twelve Essays* (in Chinese), 1980; Zhang Guangyu, 'M. N. Roy in Wuhan', *China Report*, Jan.–March 1988, pp. 81–97. SNR.

Chapter VIII

The tactics of the C. P. of China, led actually by Borodin, in the critical period of November 1926 to July 1927, were determined entirely by the assumption that the Nationalist Government of Wuhan represented the radical left wing of the Kuo Min Tang. This assumption, in its turn, was based upon the fact that the Wuhan Government rose out of the opposition to the Napoleonic tendency of Chiang Kai-shek. In order to win over, in its struggle against the dictatorship of Chiang Kai-shek, the support of the masses, particularly the rank and file of the Kuo Min Tang, the Wuhan Nationalist group made pseudo-radical gestures and assumed the distinction of 'left Kuo Min Tang'. It claimed to be the faithful standard-bearer of what came to be known as Sun Yat-senism. To legalize this claim, so to say, the Wuhan Group accepted the formal leadership of Wang Chin-wei, and called him back from his exile. By social composition, the Wuhan Group, however, was hardly distinguishable from the rival faction of Chiang Kai-shek, with its seat at Nanking. Its actual leadership was vested in the feudal general Tang Shen-chi who had embraced the nationalist cause recently in its days of triumph. Then in the leading circle of the group sat such men as Tan Yen-Kai, Sun-Zo, George Hsu, Eugene Chen, and others. Tan Yen-Kai, a patriarchal provincial satrap since the days of the Manchus, belonged to the highly conservative old guard of the Kuo Min Tang. Sun-Zo, a son of the departed nationalist leader, Sun Yat-Sen, always belonged to the right wing of the party, and had opposed his father's radical deviations. George Hsu, formerly chaplain of the Christian general Feng Yu-hsiang's army, was an eminent conservative dignitary of the Church, the first Chinese Christian raised to the Bishopric. The mercurial Eugene Chen was a Victorian liberal, if anything politically. He wrote flamboyant diplomatic notes on the dictation of Borodin, but insisted that there should be no strikes in factories owned by foreigners, because they disturbed his diplomatic dealings.

The Communists under the influence of Borodin recognized such a contingent as the 'left wing' of the Kuo Min Tang, and staked the future of the revolution on such a highly questionable team. The only thing in favour of the Wuhan Group was that it apparently maintained friendly relations with the Communists to the extent of admitting two of them into the Government. The Wuhan Group, as it was, did not represent the left wing of the Kuo Min Tang, but it could be transformed into a platform for petty bourgeois radicalism—an instrument to rally the nationalist rank and file in a decisive fight against the treacherous bourgeois leadership and the would-be Napoleonism of Chiang Kai-shek. This could, however, be accomplished only in one way, by sharpening the class antagonisms inside the Kuo Min Tang, by forcing its split horizontally. As long as the representatives of all the reactionary classes—patriarchal officialdom, feudal-militarists, and big bourgeoisie—controlled the Wuhan Group, it made for a vertical split of the Kuo Min Tang, on the line of factional interests. Therefore, the possible transformation of the Wuhan Group into an instrument of revolutionary struggle was, in the first place, conditional upon the expulsion of the reactionaries, who still sat in its leading circle. From the beginning, when its very existence depended upon the support of the masses and the sympathy of the Kuo Min Tang membership, it should have been forced to accept the condition of sanctioning the enforcement of the programme of democratic revolution. The Communist Party then occupied the position of vantage. The enemy had been driven out of the Yangtze Valley by the mass action of the proletariat before the nationalist army occupied it. Hankow itself was captured by the workers bravely defying the imperialist battleships on the river. The workers handed over the victory to Tang Shen-chi. The great old Chinese city of Woochang on the southern bank of the Yangtze was recovered by the 'Iron army' mostly officered by the Communists.

Under such circumstances the Communists could have easily dictated terms. It was on the report of these events that the Executive Committee of the International in November 1926 recommended the policy of supporting the Wuhan Government and advised the Communists to enter it. But the advantage was thrown away. The Communist party did not dictate terms; on the contrary, it restrained the agrarian revolution, so that the Wuhan Government could secure the adhesion of feudal militarists, in its factional fight against Chiang Kai-shek.[19]. In other words, the Communists helped the reactionaries entrench their position in the Wuhan Group, and acquire military forces which were before long turned against the Communists.

Had the Communists followed up the initial victories of the city workers with a general offensive in the village, the crystallization of a counter-revolutionary army, nominally under the flag of the Wuhan Government, could have been prevented, and the latter, in a helpless position, would have endorsed a radical programme. This of course would not be approved by the reactionaries, who would thus be pitted against the nationalist rank and file, whose support they wanted to utilize in their factional fight against Chiang Kai-shek. Consequently they would either leave or be expelled from the Wuhan group, and this would become the leader of the revolutionary rank and file against the reactionary leadership. The Kuo Min Tang would split on the basis of the class antagonism precipitated in its ranks by the development of the revolution. The reconstructed fighting alliance of classes in the national democratic revolution would be more homogeneous. The Wuhan Government would become a democratic dictatorship—the form of the state to be created by colonial democratic revolutions in this epoch of capitalist decline.

Note

[19] T'an P'ing-shan, Communist Minister of Agriculture in Wuhan, publicly declared that 'excessive demands of the peasants' have 'of necessity to be controlled and checked' (*The People's Tribune*, Hankow, 29 May 1927). The Central Committee of the CCP sent a Circular Letter to All Party Members' on 7 August 1927, denouncing peasant attacks on landlords. Brandt, Schwarz, and Fairbank, *A Documentary History of Chinese Communism*, Harvard, 1952, p. 112. SNR.

Chapter IX

By the time M. N. Roy reached China the game was nearly lost. The situation could be saved only by quick and determined action. This was not possible when the entire party leadership, backed by those who had until then acted as representatives of the International, were opposed to revolutionary action. Accepting the new resolution of the International formally, they openly resisted and sabotaged its application. That was tragic, when every day counted, and counter-revolution was on the offensive.

Arriving at Canton in the beginning of 1927, Roy found the Communists still afraid of attacking Chiang Kai-shek, although there could no longer be any doubt about his counter-revolutionary motive. In the province of Kiangsi, occupied by his army, peasants and workers were attacked everywhere. He was evidently in secret negotiation not only with the Shanghai bourgeoisie, but also with the northern militarists and even imperialists. Japanese envoys had visited him secretly. His army stood inactive in the vicinity of Shanghai, when the proletariat, acting as the heroic vanguard of the army of national revolution, attacked the northern army of occupation and defied the formidable concentration of the forces of international imperialism. He allowed the élite of the anti-imperialist struggle, the Shanghai proletariat, to be butchered by counter-revolution. He did not raise a finger to come to their aid. His already known hostility to the communists was no longer hidden. He inaugurated the campaign to purge the Kuo Min Tang of communists. He swore to destroy Wuhan unless the rival nationalist camp declared war upon the communists and suppressed the workers' and peasants' movement.

With much difficulty, Roy persuaded the communists at Canton to issue a manifesto, in the name of all the mass organizations of the city, demanding explanation of the actions of Chiang Kai-shek, and giving the slogan: 'Call back Wang Chin-wei[20]. The object of the slogan was to rally the bulk of Kuo Min Tang membership in the struggle against Chiang Kai-shek's Napoleonism. The Communists were very reluctant to issue the slogan, because it was the signal for a declaration of war against Chiang Kai-shek. Counter-revolution was clearly on the offensive; still the communists were not prepared to attack.

On the way from Canton to Wuhan (this was the name given collectively to the three cities situated at the junction of the Yangtse and the Ban, namely Woochang, Hankow, and Hanyang), Roy found that the slogan about the return of Wang Chin-wei had been issued none too soon. In every village, the demand was being put forth by mass meetings. In the province of Hunan, the anti-Chiang Kai-shek campaign was in full swing. Hunan was the domain of Tang Shen-chi, who had become the generalissimo of the Wuhan army. He had joined the nationalist campaign to fish in troubled waters. His ascendency and occupation of the key point of Central China piqued Chiang. Tang Shen-chi, on his part, aspired to supplant Chiang at the head of the entire Nationalist Army. It was he who secretly encouraged the anti-Chiang campaign, first in his own province and then forced the hands of the Wuhan Government. A campaign promoted by personal rivalry, however, secured tremendous popular support, because it corresponded to a political necessity. But the personal element cut across the political reason, and confused the whole campaign, which eventually fizzled out. Subconscious class antagonism made the campaign so popular. This substance of the campaign never came to the fore. It was the duty of the communists to develop the campaign on the line of class antagonism. They had failed to initiate the campaign. Nor did they guide it on the right channel, when it was started. On the contrary, they played a second fiddle in the campaign, thus becoming a party to the factional struggle between counter-revolutionary militarists.

Chiang Kai-shek was not to be fought as an individual. He was the leader of the counter-revolution. He represented the striving of the nationalist bourgeoisie to arrest the progress of the democratic revolution, because it was exceeding narrow political limits and was raising social problems. But the solution of these social problems, particularly the agrarian, was required for the welfare of the majority of the population. Thus Chiang Kai-shek stood for the suppression of the majority in the interests of a minority. His mission was to set up a military dictatorship as the instrument of the feudal–bourgeois ruling clique. This being the case, all that Chiang stood for was antagonistic to the interest of the nationalist masses, to the subconscious motive of the movement for national liberation. Hence the popularity of the anti-Chiang campaign. The campaign failed because its social character remained obscure behind factional issues. Assuming the form of a duel between two rival groups of militarists, it was bound to end in the victory of the stronger.

Chiang's was the stronger side because it was financed from Shanghai and supplied from abroad. Chiang Kai-shek had started on the north expedition with the object of coming within the reach of this dual source of support. Under a revolutionary leadership, the nationalist army would have left Shanghai alone. Having captured the middle Yangtse provinces, it would have marched towards Peking to smash the northern militarism completely. Then it would have been able to close upon the base of international imperialism from all sides and overwhelm it, without any serious military operation, by blockading it overland. But in such a position the nationalists would have to entrench themselves by carrying through the agrarian revolution, and depend entirely upon the Soviet Republic for supplies. That would be placing themselves under the influence of the revolutionary proletariat, nationally as well as internationally. Chiang Kai-shek foresaw all these, and made straight in the direction where be was sure to be beaten, if he really wanted to fight. No Chinese army could ever capture Shanghai or come near it, without the sanction of international imperialism. Chiang was allowed to enter Shanghai only after he had established his counter-revolutionary bonafides. His first act upon reaching his coveted goal was to massacre the communists and barbarously suppress the revolutionary democratic movement.[21] With Shanghai as his base, financed by the Chinese bourgeoisie and supplied liberally by international imperialism, he could defeat any rival in the land, unless this latter were the standard-bearers of a thoroughgoing democratic revolution.

Notes

[20] Roy reached Canton early in February 1927 where he wrote the article 'The Significance of the Chinese Revolution' (22.2.1927) and the text of the warning issued on 27.2.1927 on behalf of the CCP and allied organizations. On 9 March he issued a second warning, 'watch the leaders'. All these documents are included in North and Eudin, *M. N. Roy's Mission to China*, 1963, pp. 146–59. SNR.

[21] On 17 March 1927 Stalin denied the possibility of Chiang Kai-shek turning against the Communists. However, the Communists in Shanghai began storing arms in preparation for an attack by Chiang. The Central Committee was very divided and confused; it was instructed by Moscow not to precipitate a crisis situation. Shanghai was captured by the Nationalist forces on 22 March; on 26 March Chiang arrived unannounced aboard a gunboat. Ch'en Tu-hsiu and Wang Ching-wei (who had just returned from France) issued a joint statement strongly advocating collaboration between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party, and denying that there was any basis for the suspicion that the Kuomintang intended to 'make war on the Communist Party and suppress the labour unions'. Communist underground forces were ordered to bury all arms and ammunition. Chiang had established contact with financiers and anti-communist forces. According to George Sokolsky, an American correspondent at that time reporting from Shanghai, 'bankers and merchants flocked to Chiang Kai-shek's standard. The Shanghai Chinese Bankers' Association . . . arranged for an immediate 3,000,000 dollar loan . . . Arrangements were made with the Green and Red Societies', and on 12 April, at dawn, squads of armed men 'began rounding up Communists, seizing whatever weapons were found, and executing whoever resisted. Within a few days Communists in Shanghai were all but annihilated'. G. Sokolsky, *The Tinder Box of Asia*, 1932; R. C. North, *Moscow and the Chinese Communists*, 1963; Ch'en Tu-hsiu, 'Letter to the Comrades', Shanghai, 10 Dec. 1929; *The China Year Book*, 1928. SNR.

Chapter X

Tang Shen-chi, however, was not in a hurry to have an actual trial of strength with his stronger rival. He simply exploited the subconscious revolutionary urge of the masses to increase his military strength and establish his dictatorship at Wuhan. While Chiang Kai-shek was still struggling to establish himself in the lower Yangtse provinces, the prestige of Wuhan was very high. The Wuhan group did occupy a very advantageous position, as pointed out above. It had the backing of the revolutionary masses and sympathy of the nationalist rank and file throughout the country. Owing to the lack of the revolutionary leadership, which under the given conditions could only come from the communists, Wuhan could not for any length of time retain the proud position of the centre of revolutionary China. Chiang Kai-shek's welcome in Shanghai, and the establishment of the nationalist government at Nanking cast a shadow upon Wuhan. Finding their prestige on the decline, but afraid of risking a decisive fight with the rival, the Wuhan group sought cheap military glory. Chiang Kai-shek was preparing to march to Peking. The Wuhan group decided to forestall him. They thought the glory of capturing Peking would be greater than the occupation of Shanghai. Another reason for the so-called second North Expedition was to win over Feng Yu-hsing, who was craftily waiting to sell his support to the stronger side and the highest bidder. The motive behind the projected military adventure, however, was to run away from the social tasks of the revolution. The scheme was to divert the attention of the masses, and have them suspend their demands pending military operations.

The execution of the plan depended upon Tang Shen-chi. He was not at all eager to leave his base in quest of pyrrhic victories. He was particularly unwilling to effect the desired junction with the forces of Feng. For, in that eventuality, his position as the Generalissimo of the Wuhan Government would be jeopardized, Feng would not subordinate himself to his command, and to bring the powerful army of Feng under its flag, the Wuhan Government would most likely appoint him its commander-in-chief. On the other hand, Tang Shen-chi knew that Feng was in secret communication with Chiang Kai-shek, and would join forces with him if the Wuhan group delayed much in offering him their term. The alliance of Feng and Chiang would threaten the very existence of Wuhan. Besides Tang Shen-chi could not remain idle indefinitely, should he want to retain popular support. So, with mixed feelings, he approved of the second North Expedition. But he was too shrewd to risk his own forces. He placed the Cantonese troops at the forefront of the expedition.

The projected military adventure was obviously dangerous for the revolution. Its object was to increase the power of the Nationalist Government, so that it could shake off the influence of the masses. Then, on the pretext of war conditions, the government would surely appeal for peace in the rear, as it afterwards did. That would give the reactionary forces time to recover their lost position, and assume the offensive.

On these grounds, Roy opposed the proposed military campaign, and maintained that the Communist party should not support it. He made an alternative proposal to be pressed by the communists.[22] It was to strengthen the base provinces of Hupeh and Hunan of the Wuhan government, by exterminating the reactionary forces (the landlords and the village gentry) in the territories under its control; then to extend its power effectively in the provinces of Kwangtung (the original base of the nationalists), and Kwangsi. A powerful mass movement had developed in these four provinces (with a total population of nearly 100 millions) on the occasion of the march of the Nationalist Army from Canton to the Yangtse. There were about a million workers and five times as many peasants organized.[23] General political consciousness was very advanced. Firmly established in these provinces, the Wuhan government would be nearly invulnerable. Then it would be able to encircle Shanghai from inland, and defeat the combined force, of Chiang Kai-shek and international imperialism. Meanwhile, Feng Yu-hsiang may be asked to advance eastward to threaten the flank of Chiang should he march to Peking on the Tientsienpukow Railway. Holding the Lunghai Railway that joins the two trunk lines connecting Peking with the Yangtze Valley, as his base, Feng could press towards the North. That would be a bait to keep him away from Chiang Kai-shek.

The Communist leaders would not accept Roy's alternative plan of action. They argued that refusal to support the second North expedition would amount to a break with the Kuo Min Tang. Borodin propounded a defeatist theory, and advocated retreat. He argued that Wuhan could not be held. The revolutionary forces were very weak. The remains of the ruin must be safely withdrawn to a new base in the north-west. This was a fantastic proposition which revealed a remarkable lack of faith in the masses, which was also the source of his previous opportunism. His another astounding contention was to set a conglomeration of military forces in motion, in the hope that something positive might come out of the chaos. Fatalism, still another fountainhead of opportunism! With such people in the leading ranks of the party, who in the revolutionary crisis exposed themselves to be such hopeless imbeciles, it would have been a veritable miracle if the almost certain disaster had been averted.[24]

Even such a miracle could possibly have been worked, had the communist leaders at the eleventh hour shown some understanding of revolutionary tactics. Had the Wuhan Government been given clearly to understand that the Communist Party would not endorse the military adventure, the plan would have been abandoned, for, without the support and sacrifice of the masses, the campaign could not have been undertaken with any hope of success. So the Communists still held the key position. Instead of dictating terms, while they still could do so, they capitulated. They called upon the masses to support a consciously counterrevolutionary military adventure. The old theory, of first broadening the revolution, was again expounded. It was contended that insistence upon the solution of the agrarian problem in the nationalist territories would mean war with the Kuo Min Tang. M. N. Roy referred the disputed question to Moscow. The answer was ambiguous. It was in favour of doing both the things simultaneously: to carry on the military plan and to develop the revolution in the territories of the Wuhan government.[25] This was an impossibility. It proved to be so in experience, before long.

As soon as the military operations began, the Nationalist Government demanded suspension of class struggle in the rear. Strikes were prohibited on the ground that any interference with industry, trade, and transport adversely affected the supply for the army, and were therefore counter-revolutionary. Anti-imperialist activities were also forbidden on the plea that the Nationalist Government could not risk diplomatic difficulties when its armies were fighting on the front. Extra taxes were levied and forced loans raised to meet the military expenditure. Prices soared high in consequence, for the merchants immediately passed on the burden of taxation and loans to the masses. On the other hand, the workers could not demand any increase of wages as that might lead to industrial strikes. Taking advantage of the situation, employers reduced wages on the patriotic plea of economy at the time of war. Further, the workers were asked to perform overtime labour as a revolutionary duty. The peasants were asked not to hold any stock of rice, because this was needed for the army. What thus amounted to obligatory sale brought down the price of rice. The peasants lost while the grain merchants lined their pockets. The militancy of the peasant movement was curbed on the pretext that there must be social peace in the rear of a revolutionary army. The social peace gave the landlords and the village gentry the time to prepare the attack upon the peasants which presently began.

At the front, fortune did not smile upon the Wuhan government. Feng Yu-hsiang did not turn out to be a very agreeable ally. He blocked the road to Peking, himself being in no hurry to move. He arrogantly advised the Wuhan group to make peace with Chaing Kai-shek and, as the condition for that, to suppress the communists and send their Russian advisers away. Feng's attitude gave Tang Shen-chi the occasion to withdraw his troops back to the base. They were unscathed. The fighting was done by the Cantonese troops alone, which were nearly exterminated.

While the military operations were on, and social peace was being preached on patriotic grounds, detachments of Tang Shen-chi's army in the province of Hunan rose in open revolt against the Wuhan Government. The insurgents marched upon the capital without any resistance. They were stopped and were defeated in the vicinity of Woochang by a volunteer corps hastily organized by the communist commandant of the city. There could be no doubt that the insurrection took place with the sanction of the Hunan Generalissimo. It was also discovered that the counter-revolutionary officers were at the same time in league with Nanking. While passively waiting to be overthrown by the counter-revolutionary insurgents, the government itself justified their action. It agreed that 'excesses', committed by the peasantry, were driving the army officers to revolt, because they all came from the small landowning families. The government called upon the communists to check the 'excesses' of the peasantry. The call did not fall on deaf ears. Borodin fulminated against the 'ravages' of the peasantry, and ordered his Chinese disciples to help counter-revolution by checking the militancy of the peasants' movement.[26] He raised the bogey of the break with the 'left' Kuo Min Tang—a bogey that still scared the Chinese Communist leaders into rank opportunism, which in that revolutionary crisis amounted to gross betrayal of the masses.

Counter-revolution developed rapidly. A few days after the defeat of the insurgents under the walls of Woochang, there was a counter-revolutionary *coup d'état* at Changsha, the capital of Hunan. This threw the communists in such a panic as deprived them of all good sense. Under the instructions of Borodin, the Communist Minister of interior and Agriculture, Tan Ping-shan, volunteered to go himself to Hunan with the object of correcting the 'excesses' of the peasants' unions. Roy vigorously objected to the communists undertaking the task of checking the revolutionary action of the peasants, in order to placate the reactionary army officers. It was pointed out that the restraining of the development of agrarian revolution, on the plea of not disturbing the rear, when the army was fighting on the front, had enabled the forces of reaction to go over to the offensive. Further restraint would have demoralized the peasants' movement, and encouraged counter-revolution to raise its bloody head in the villages. But Roy's objection was disregarded.

Then Roy proposed that Tan Ping-shan might go, and when on the spot, his mission should not be to check the 'excesses' of the peasants' movement, but to set up village self-government, conferring political power and police duty upon the peasants' unions. That would be setting up Soviets in fact, if not in name. The peasant unions were the rallying ground of the rural oppressed and exploited masses. In his capacity of Minister of Interior, Tan Ping-shan was in charge of the local self-government and police. The action proposed, therefore, was within his official competence. Properly and courageously guided, the peasant unions could easily become Soviets, disarm the rowdies and ruffians in the pay of the landlords, and create a militia as the nucleus of a real revolutionary army. The rank and file communists working in the villages were eager for such a line of action, but they were restrained by orders of the Central Committee of the Party. Many of them lost patience, and acted independently under pressure of the masses. Military officers and reactionary nationalist leaders raised a hue and cry against those 'excesses'. They were also condemned by the communist leaders, who imagined it to be their revolutionary duty to correct those 'excesses'. Tan Ping-shan's peace mission, however, did not materialize. The counter-revolutionary insurgents of Changsha would not let it through.

It was evident that not only Tang Shen-chi was behind the Changsha insurrection but that even the nationalist government connived with that movement, ostensibly directed against itself. For, nothing absolutely was done to suppress the rebellion. The insurgents had a very small force at their disposal. A punitive expedition of a couple of thousand good troops under reliable officers would have easily overwhelmed them. But they were left undisturbed, obviously to gather strength and go on with their bloody attacks on the communists and the workers' and peasants' organizations. All the leading communists of the city, including two young girls, were brutally massacred. Trade Unions were suppressed; and the political school for the peasants was closed down. Insurgents threatened to march to Wuhan and overthrow the government there, unless the latter sanctioned the suppression of the revolutionary workers' and peasants' movement and punished the communists.

The Wuhan Government looked upon the situation impotently, but at heart was relieved at the turn events were taking. It ostentatiously charged its Generalissmo to control his subordinates, and establish *status quo ante bellum* at Changsha. Tang Shen-chi accepted the mission, but was in no hurry to do anything.

It was no longer possible for the communists to continue playing the second fiddle. Such a policy was no longer mere opportunism. It would be a criminal and rank betrayal of the revolution. Therefore Roy proposed that the Central Committee of the C. P. should address an open letter to the Kuo Min Tang exposing the latter's counter-revolutionary crimes of omission and commission.[27] The Open Letter should be an ultimatum, and the signal for a general revolutionary offensive, under the independent leadership of the C. P.

For concrete action Roy proposed: 1. The peasants to be led in an attack upon Changsha, supported by a quickly raised irregular army commanded by communists and revolutionary nationalists; and 2. Strike in the Hanyang arsenal with the demand that 25 per cent of the arms and munitions produced should be handed over to Trade Unions, for the purpose of creating a Workers' Militia, as a guarantee against the counter-revolution; 3. A mass demonstration to support the demand of the arsenal workers, to endorse the Open Letter of the Communist Party and to demand that the Nationalist Government and the Kuo Min Tang should immediately call upon the peasants to overthrow the counter-revlutionary insurgents of Changsha, and to destroy rural reaction; 4. Then general strike to enforce the demands formulated by the demonstration. Finally an armed uprising, to begin with the capture of the arsenal.

Roy's plan of action appeared fantastic to the communist leaders, trained in the school of systematic opportunism. The acute revolutionary crisis had totally demoralized them. They were seized with panic and defeatism. Instead of listening to his arguments in favour of determined offensive, as the only creditable way out of the situation, they yielded to all the demands of the Nationalists. The Trade Unions disbanded their volunteer corps; even the young pioneers (military formation of proletarian children) were deprived of their sticks; class-struggle in any form was forbidden; and to cap the climax of capitulation, the Trade Unions set up tribunals to enforce what was shamelessly called 'revolutionary discipline'. The tribunal punished workers for agitating in favour of strikes, rikshaw carriers for protesting against insufficient payment and insults by foreigners, boatmen for refusing to serve foreign soldiers, volunteers for jeering at reactionary traders, so on and so forth.

In despair, Roy tried to act over the head of the impossible Political Bureau (the supreme leadership) of the C. P. He demanded a plenary meeting of the Central Committee to which prominent local leaders should be called. His demand was opposed on the plea that important members of the Party could not leave their respective posts in those critical days. The leaders were against the plenary session, because local workers were impatient for decisive action, and would have surely endorsed Roy's plan. As the last resort, he sought to act with the cooperation of individual comrades, Chinese as well as Russian. The military adviser, Comrade Galen, was fully in agreement with Roy.[28] Many other Russian comrades had also come round to his view by that time. But all power was centred in the hands of Borodin. Moscow had backed up Roy politically as against Borodin's opportunism. Nevertheless, Borodin was still left in the controlling position, and consequently functioned as the dictator of the Communist Party. Being mostly his disciples, and ideologically akin anyway, the leaders of the C.P. of China followed him, disregarding repeatedly the instructions of the International.

It was possible to raise an irregular force, several thousands strong, for temporary operations against Changsha pending the formation of the revolutionary army with peasant volunteers. To secure the services of the improvised force, it was necessary to pay the troops a month's wages in advance. Borodin controlled the purse-strings. In the beginning he promised Roy to supply him with the required money. When all arrangements were made, and the peasants unions had been informed of the impending attack upon Changsha, he had no funds at his disposal. Consequently, the plan had to be abandoned. But all was not lost as yet. The peasants, led by local communists and revolutionary nationalists, closed upon Changsha in a semicircle. Over 20,000 of them came within a few miles of the city meeting no resistance. In the city itself the counter-revolutionary force was very small. The workers as well as the petty bourgeois masses would have welcomed the peasants' army. So, the capture of the centre of counter-revolution was imminent. All of a sudden, the peasants began to fall back. The counter-revolutionary troops sallied forth, chased the peasants, demoralized by the sudden order to retreat, and massacred thousands of them. That was a signal for a general offensive of counter-revolution throughout the provinces where peasant movement was the strongest.

The sudden retreat of the peasants, throwing away a sure victory at Changsha, was the result of an order, sent out by the Communist leadership at Wuhan without Roy's knowledge. The writer refrains from characterizing that act: one is tempted to use very damaging terms.[29]

At Wuhan, there was a demonstration, but not with the original purpose.[30] It was to welcome the commanders of the victorious army and the members of the Nationalist Government, who had been to the front for a conference with Feng Yu-hsiang. There could not be any bitterer irony of fate. The 'victorious' commanders, outwitted by the crafty Christian general, presently wreaked their vengeance upon the foolish communists. The distressing encounter with Feng had convinced most of the Wuhan leaders of the futility of the struggle for supremacy against Chiang Kai-shek, who was by that time firmly entrenched in the lower Yangtze provinces.

The important leader of petty bourgeois radicalism, Wang Chin-wei was in a quandary. He was a tragic figure, standing helplessly on board the sinking ship of national democratic revolution. The foolish tactics of the communists—Borodin's policy of a military combination under Tang Shen-chi—had driven Wang Chin-wei into the embrace of the reactionary clique. But it was difficult for him to turn his coat all of a sudden. His position was not based upon the control of armed forces; nor had he come to prominence through factional intrigues. He was the chosen successor of Sun Yat-sen. Democratic radicalism was the basis of his tremendous popularity. He could trifle with his political creed inherited from Sun Yat-sen, only at the risk of his political life. On the other hand, his rival to the supreme Nationalist leadership, Chiang Kai-shek, would never give him any quarter unless he foreswore his principles. Compromise with Chiang would speed up Wang's political death.

Such a figure was not to be disregarded, when every available weapon should be used for what it was worth, to avert the disaster which appeared to be imminent. The odds were all turning against the communists, who had so vigorously disarmed themselves. Besides, the attack was not upon the communists alone. It was against the national democratic revolution. So the urban petty bourgeois masses were also under attack objectively. As a matter of fact, many rank and file Kuo Min Tang members were incurring the displeasure of the reactionary ruling clique and actually falling victims to bloody counter-revolution, due to their close association with the communists. The slogan of Chiang Kai-shek, a slogan taken up by the reactionaries of Wuhan, was to purge the Kuo Min Tang of the communists and their friends. In such a situation efforts should be made for a closer fighting alliance with the urban petty bourgeois masses to resist the march of counter-revolution. Such an alliance was still an objective necessity, since the national democratic stage of revolution was not yet complete. Should the efforts succeed, counter-revolution might be checked and the situation saved.

Therefore Roy recommended the tactics of a *rapprochement* with Wang Chin-wei, with the object of detaching him from the reactionary ruling clique. He had been much alienated by Borodin's 'Tang Shen-chi orientation'. In personal conversation with Roy he bitterly complained that the communists were intriguing against himself with the militarists.

Roy proposed that the plan of reorganizing the Kuo Min Tang should be presented to Wang Chin-wei.[31] The substance of the plan was: local conferences of the membership; adoption at those conferences of the platform of National Revolution; convocation of an emergency Party Congress of delegates, elected at the local conferences; endorsement by the emergency Congress of the Platform of National Revolution; re-election of the Party leadership and exclusion from the new leadership of all who did not unconditionally agree to stand on the Platform of National Revolution. The main planks in the Platform of National Revolution were: confiscation of landed property over a fixed maximum limit, power of the peasants' unions to carry on the confiscation and to distribute the confiscated land to the actual cultivators; freedom of the peasantry from all charges and levies except a unitary land tax; abolition of likin (internal customs duty); disarming of the armed forces of the rural reaction; formation of a village militia out of the members of the peasants' unions; investing the peasants' unions with functions of village self-government; nationalization of mines and railways; eight-hour day and minimum wages for the industrial workers; establishment of workers' councils in factories, etc.; formation of a workers' militia; creation of a revolutionary army directly under the nationalist government; struggle against the traitors of Nanking, and vigorous prosecution of the anti-imperialist fight.

The Communist leaders did not pay much attention to Roy's proposals. To fool them and to deceive the masses Tang Shen-chi made a show of sending an expedition down the river against Nanking. That was a pretence to send away the remnants of the Cantonese army which might resist his counter-revolutionary plan. Borodin pathetically clung to Tang Shen-chi, thus alienating Wang Chin-wei still more, just when his popularity should have been enlisted in the efforts to save the revolution. Thinking that the communists were intriguing against him, he definitely sided with the reactionary clique, which was clamouring for the blood of the communists to propitiate Chiang Kai-shek. The debacle of the paragon of Democratic Radicalism opened wide the floodgates of counter-revolution. Wuhan Kuo Min Tang expelled the communists, and the Nationalist government declared them to be outlaws. The bloodthirsty officers of Tang Shen-chi were impatiently marking time. They went to the job in right earnest. The sanguinary scene enacted by Chiang Kai-shek in Shanghai in March was repeated in the realm of the 'left' Kuo Min Tang only four months later. All the Russian advisers, including the great Borodin, were sent away. The last political act of Borodin was to have a meeting of the Central Committee of the C. P. convened, to adopt the 'Platform of Retreat', drafted under his personal supervision.[32] Roy had left a week or so earlier.

Notes

[22] The text of Roy's alternative proposal to the CCP leadership dated 13–15 April 1927 is given in translation in *Selected Works of M. N. Roy, Vol II*, 'The Base and the Social Forces of the Revolution', pp. 605–19. SNR.

[23] According to Tsai Ho-sen (Cai Hesen), himself a leading figure of the CCP, in the spring of 1927 peasant uprisings in Kiangsi, Kwangtung, Hunan, and Hupeh involved 'not less than 15,000,000 persons', *Problemy Kitaia*, No. 1, 1929. SNR.

[24] Besides Roy, other communist protagonists of the period in China have left their own first hand accounts of the Roy–Borodin differences. For example, *Twelve Essays of Cai Hesen* (in Chinese), People's Publishing House, Beijing, 1980; Li Lisan, *A Selection of Report on Party History*, Beijing; Qu Qiubai, *A Report in the Sixth Congress of the CCP*. Roy-Borodin conflict is highlighted in Jian Yongjing, *Borodin and the Wuhan Regime* (in Chinese), Taipeh, 1963. SNR.

[25] Stalin's telegraphic instruction of 1 June 1927, was considered to be 'ludicrous' by Borodin who decided 'to shelve it'. C. Brandt, *Stalin's Failure in China*, 1958, p. 135. For the text of the telegram, Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, 1935, p. 249. SNR.

[26] Opposing Borodin's view, Roy submitted a statement on 9 June 1927: 'The Counter Revolution and Communist Tactics: Defence or Offence': 'What do these demonstrations

represent which the Kuomintang brands as “excesses” and which Comrade Ch’en Tu-hsiu condemns as an infantile disorder? They are, in fact, revolutionary actions of the working class and the peasant masses.’ *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia.* SNR.

[27] An abridged version of the Open Letter appeared in *Inprecor*, Vol. 7, 37, 30 June 1927. The full text was given in *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia.* SNR.

[28] In *My Experience in China*, Roy added an explanatory footnote which mentioned that Galen (Vasilii Konstantinovich Bluecher, 1889–1938) was ‘the creator of the cadre of the Nationalist army. Acting as the Chief of the Staff, he planned the entire North Expedition and actually commanded all major operations . . . [he] was staying at Wuhan while I was there.’

In 1938 Galen was dismissed from his duties and he mysteriously disappeared like many other victims of Stalin.

SNR.

[29] According to T’sai Ho-sen (Cai Hesen), who was at the time a member of the CCP Politbureau, Roy ‘was right in his opinion but his fault lay in failing to take measures against it’. *Problemy Kitaia*, No. 1, 1929. SNR.

[30] In *My Experience in China* there is a passage here which might have been missed by the copyist, or which might have been added later. This passage has been quoted in the introductory editorial note. SNR.

[31] On 15 June 1927 Roy submitted to the Politbureau of the CCP a ‘Draft of the Platform of the National Revolution’. It was adopted, but two very crucial proposals in the Draft were rejected—namely, confiscation of land; and the creation of a peasant militia and an urban militia of armed workers under the control of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. More significantly, the Politbureau took no decision regarding insistence that the Kuomintang adopt this Platform. For the relevant documents, *M. N. Roy’s Mission to China*, 1963, pp. 345–55. SNR.

[32] *My Experience in China* added some passages and a long footnote to this section, explaining why Roy showed Moscow’s message to Wang. See my introductory editorial note.

The ‘Platform of Retreat’ is probably the ‘Letter to the Shanghai Committee’ proposed by the Secretariat of the CCP., maintaining that ‘the immediate break with the Kuomintang will mean the immediate liquidation of our party’, i.e. the CCP), and which, therefore, rejected land-confiscation and ‘the arming of workers and peasants? *See* Documents 35 and 36 in *M. N. Roy’s Mission to China*, pp. 361–9.

SNR.

Chapter XI

Tang Shen-chi had sent the remnants of the Cantonese 'Iron Army' down the Yangtze to attack Nanking. So there was absolutely no opposition to the fierce counter-revolutionary offensive of Wuhan and the terrorists under its control. The power of resistance of the masses had been broken by the steady disruption of their organizations. The Communist leaders were themselves responsible for the disruptive work. It had been done in pursuance of their anxiety to placate the reactionary nationalist politicians and their 'left' militarist allies. Prolonged restraint upon their will to fight, had demoralized them. The few arms in the possession of the workers had been surrendered at the order of their communist leaders. The peasants had not been allowed to act decisively while the landlords were at their mercy. They had not been encouraged to capture power in the villages, thus leaving the reactionary forces intact to take the offensive at the first available opportunity. The decisive factor had been the failure of the communists to arm the workers and peasants, when it could have been so easily done, during the military expedition from Canton to Yangtze.

Consequently, when the blow of counter-revolution fell, it proved to be altogether crushing. The mass movement had carried the nationalists to spectacular victories, but when it was itself attacked, it showed little power of resistance. It had not been consolidated. The revolution had been broadened, but not deepened. Built upon a foundation purposely left shallow, it collapsed like a pack of cards. It was a great tragedy.

After the tables had been decisively turned, after the battle had been irretrievably lost, the communists made up their mind to attack, as if in despair. It was indeed a desperate move to begin the offensive when all the odds were against them. Still, the communists, acting under categorical instructions of the International leadership, given several months too late, went over to the offensive. It was a sheer adventure, and made the defeat a disaster.[33]

On the way to Nanking, the Cantonese army revolted. The motive was not revolutionary. They were fed up with vicarious crusading, and wanted to go home. The communists, defeated and chased out of Wuhan, seized upon the mutiny of the Cantonese army as a drowning man catches a straw. They reached Nanchang, occupied by the mutineers, and declared the establishment of the Revolutionary Government, which under given conditions, was bound to be at the mercy of the Cantonese commanders. Nanchang was a place between two fires. It could not possibly be held for any length of time. On one side, it was within striking distance from Nanking, the centre of counter-revolution; on the other side, Tang Shen-chi's army was coming down the river drunk with the bloody victory of war. Then, until recently Nanchang was the headquarters of Chiang Kai-shek's army. Being a small river port, it had never been the seat of a powerful labour movement. Whatever there was had been completely destroyed by Chiang Kai-shek. The hinterland was the province of Kiangsi through which Chiang Kai-shek had marched from Canton. He had not allowed any strong development of the peasant's movement, and had suppressed all revolutionary organizations. The province was occupied by his troops. It was a grievous strategical blunder to choose Nanchang as the base of the belated revolutionary offensive. Gallen would never have allowed it; but he had left at the same time as Roy, disgusted with the manner in which a sure victory was thrown away by opportunist political leadership, and the remarkable failure of Moscow to intervene decisively in time.

Seeing that Moscow's disapproval of the fatal opportunism of the leadership of the C. P. of China would not go to the extent of removing Borodin from the place of power, thus making it impossible for Roy to make an eleventh hour effort to save the revolution, he suggested the compromise formula of collective responsibility vested in Borodin, Gallen, and himself. Galen fully agreed with Roy's view of the situation, and was in favour of a much earlier offensive. With his remarkable military talent, and given a concrete political leadership, the imminent defeat could possibly have been turned into a victory. At any rate, there was a fighting chance. But military operations in defence of the revolution were delayed until the only available man who could properly direct them, had gone away.

Nanchang had to be evacuated by the insurrectionary army within two weeks. The Revolutionary Government had to follow the army, marching not with any other motive than to return home.

The Nanchang insurrection provided the rival Kuo Min Tang factions with a plausible pretext to bury their hatchets. The Wuhan group went into voluntary liquidation, and met the victorious Chiang Kai-shek more than half way. To smooth over all frictions and to save everybody's face, the command of the peace parleys was assumed by the elder statesmen. In other words, the leadership of the Kuo Min Tang, its hands dripping with the workers' and peasants' blood, betrayal of the national democratic revolution written to its credit, reverted to the Old Guard, representing the big bourgeoisie and feudal militarists. The counter-revolutionary offensive, begun by Chiang Kai-shek with the *coup d'état* at Canton in March 1926, was victorious. During the intervening year and a half, China was swept by a mighty revolutionary upheaval which came within an ace of success.

Confucian tactfulness, that is consummate hypocrisy, of the elder statesmen conducted the prodigal son home. Wang Chin-wei went to Nanking which, a few months ago, he had sworn to destroy as the noble Roman swore to destroy Carthage. The surrender of Wang Chin-wei marked the debacle of petty bourgeois radicalism. The revolutionary role of the Kuo Min Tang was played out. It became the organ of counter-revolution, its flag soaked with the blood of the masses who had held it so proudly aloft ever since 1923.

No fatted calf, indeed, was slaughtered to celebrate the prodigal's return home; but to save his face, his victorious rival was sent abroad on a vacation, from which he returned very soon. Wang Chin-wei again went in exile, a disgraced and discredited man. His elimination from the united Nationalist Government and from the leadership of the counter-revolutionary Kuo Min Tang revealed an irreconcilable class antagonism. The petty bourgeoisie were vanquished, and their leaders capitulated; but as an oppressed and exploited class, they had no place in the camp of the victorious counter-revolution. The petty bourgeoisie objectively remained a revolutionary factor, because the democratic national revolution was not yet complete. The defeat of a revolution should not be confounded with its completion. One of the basic mistakes committed in China was to look upon the bourgeoisie as a homogeneous social factor. The oppressed and exploited urban petty bourgeoisie were not differentiated from the reactionary big capitalists. Persistent overestimation of the revolutionary role of the nationalist bourgeoisie, mistakenly reckoned as an indivisible whole, inevitably led to a disregard for the importance of the petty bourgeoisie in a colonial national revolution. This disregard was partly responsible for the failure of the communists to transform the Wuhan Group into a powerful lever to promote the national democratic revolution. Later on, it drove the communists to the ultra-leftist adventure, which isolated them from the democratic forces, objectively militating against the dictatorship of the feudal bourgeois block. That amounted to an indirect help to the Nanking Government to consolidate its precarious existence. Instead of going to set up romantic 'Soviet Republics' in the mountainous wilderness, the communists should have organized a democratic mass movement, with the object of overthrowing the military and bureaucratic dictatorship of Nanking. But owing to their mistake of underestimating the revolutionary role of the urban petty bourgeoisie in a colonial country, they failed to adopt the policy that would have helped them to recover from the defeat before long, and to bring the final stage of the democratic national revolution under effective proletarian leadership. Democratic revolution accomplished under such a relationship of classes could not but be the immediate prelude to deeper social transformation.

Note

[33] The Nanchang Uprising was ordered by Stalin and directed by his protege Besso Lominadze. It took place on 1 August 1927; the local organizers were two Kuomintang officers, Ho Lung and Yeh T'ing—both actually communists—and they were backed by Chu Teh and Lin Piao. The uprising quickly collapsed. This was followed by the disastrous failure of the Autumn Crop Uprising in consequence of which Mao Tse-tung was dismissed from the Politbureau and the Central Committee of the CCP. SNR.

Chapter XII

Dislodged from Nanchang, the insurgents could only move southwards. In other directions the way was definitely blocked, and crushing defeat awaited them. They marched through territories infested by counter-revolutionary troops, and inhabited by a disorganized peasantry, beaten to timidity. The movement obviously had little popular support. Although the insurgent army did not meet any serious resistance on the way, it could hardly boast of a victorious march. While marching northward through the same territories, just a year ago, the Nationalist army had been acclaimed with tremendous popular enthusiasm. In course of the march it had grown so much that on reaching the Yangtze it was many times larger than its size at the time of its departure from Canton. This was not the case with the insurgent army. The peasants, of course, were not hostile, unless they were robbed, which was often the case (the troops had to be fed); but they did not join the insurgents in any considerable number. As a matter of fact, rifles, machine-guns and munitions seized, occasionally from small detachments of the counter-revolutionary troops, had to be left behind, because there were not enough men either to use them or to carry them. There could be no doubt about the deplorable fact that the revolution was beaten, the masses were totally demoralized by terror, and conditions were not at all propitious for a popular uprising. Under such circumstances, the tactics obviously should be defensive, to gather the scattered forces, to take a respite for recuperating revolutionary energy, to use all possible legal means for keeping up a popular agitation, and to reorganize the revolutionary forces in preparation for action in future.

But the very communist leaders, who steeped in opportunist tradition had refused to attack when the conditions were favourable, now became suddenly coverted to the adventurous theory of offensive. 'Armed Insurrection' and 'Soviet' became their slogans. To lead a defeated army to attack is simply to court disaster. In the morbid eagerness to live down their opportunist past, they destroyed the Party itself.

Here again, the responsibility lies with the International leadership. For the new policy of adventure was launched on mandatory instructions from Moscow. Those refusing to act according to the instructions were summarily expelled from the Party. Chen Tu-hsiu was not expelled, because he did not oppose actively; but he was removed from the leadership of the Party. He had not been treated so when, a few months ago, he actively resisted the policy recommended by the International and successfully sabotaged its enforcement. Had he been removed then from the Party leadership, as Roy suggested, the situation could have possibly been saved. But at that time, the Russian leaders of the International themselves had not yet fully cast off the tradition of opportunism. They hesitated at the fateful moment when the International leadership inclined more towards the opportunism of Chen Tu-hsiu than its own new policy, half-heartedly formulated. Hence its representative on the spot, Comrade M. N. Roy, was in such an ambiguous position. He was armed with a correct resolution and received formal political support from the centre, but was given little power to act. The real power remained vested in the opportunist leaders on the spot.

It was much too late when the Russian leaders of the International recognized their mistake. Eager to save their own face by shoving the responsibility on others, they lost the sense of proportion. They ordered the C. P. of China to attack after it had been thoroughly beaten and dislodged from all the positions of vantage. They gave out slogans of proletarian revolution, when the task of the moment was to bring the disrupted, demoralized forces of the democratic national revolution under the decisive influence of the proletariat. The C. P. of China had no leader of its own who could guide it with a first-hand knowledge and correct understanding of the situation. Before, it had been trained in the school of opportunism; now it was driven to ruinous adventure. Still, the C. P. of China grew under such conditions of a stormy mass movement as usually proves to be a very fertile soil for revolutionary leadership. But normal growth is not possible, when categorical authority suffocates independent intelligence.

Chapter XIII

The communists tried to find a foothold at the port of Swatow with the help of the insurgent army. The peasant movement had all along been very strong in hilly tracks between Swatow and Canton. The revolutionary governemnt, established at Swatow, issued a decree nationalizing land and called upon the peasants to confiscate large estates. But Swatow was assailed from inland and imperial battleships appeared in the harbour. The communists had to evacuate the place.[34] They found some support from the peasantry in the neighbourhood and declared the establishment of the 'Soviet Republic'. But the revolutionary army began to melt away. It had reached its native province. Its soldiers went home; they were sick of armed life.

Finally, the communists committed the greatest folly. They tried to capture Canton. Reaction had reigned supreme at the original seat of the nationalist government, ever since the centre of events moved to the Yangtze valley. The labour movement had been suppressed. The revolutionary spirit of the democratic masses had been broken under the ruthless dictatorship of the feudal militarist Li Chei-sun. It was in such conditions of depression that an insurrection was staged, hoping that the troops would come over and the peasants from the neighbourhood would march upon the city. A general strike was called, preparatory to the projected insurrection. Not more than 10 to 15 thousand workers responded, mostly riverside labourers. The Trade Unions in the city, once upon a time, had a membership of 150, 000. The general strike was an obvious failure. The great bulk of the workers did not join it. The revolutionary proletariat of 'Red Canton' had for a year lived under bloody terror. Their traditional fighting spirit was damped. There prevailed a general depression and demoralization, not very propitious for a revolutionary offensive. But the local conditions were not taken into consideration. The leaders of the C. P. sitting in far off Shanghai had resolved that there should be an attempt to capture Canton and to establish Soviet Government there as the signal for general insurrection throughout the country. So the attempt was made disregarding all ominous warnings. The poor response to the call for general strike should have opened the eyes of the communists and led to the postponement of the plan of insurrection. Workers were not in a fighting mood. Nevertheless, the plan was pushed. For only three days, the communists held part of the city under the Soviet flag. Even after the insurrection, and the partial occupation of the city, popular response was lukewarm. The soldiers did not go over to the insurgents. The counter-revolutionary army was withdrawn to the suburbs, from where the city was mercilessly bombarded. In two days nearly half of the city was burnt down. The counter-revolutionary ruling class would rather raze the whole city to the ground than abandon it to the workers. They did not want to speculate with the loyalty of the troops. The city could not be taken without bombardment unless the troops were allowed to come closer to the insurgents. That was rather risky. The soldiers after all were poor, dispossessed peasants, likely to be easily susceptible to revolutionary propaganda.

The expected help from the peasantry also would not come. The insurgent workers in the city held out for too short a time for the peasants to come to their relief, even if the latter were prepared for such action. The Soviet Government was overthrown. The communists rendered an exceedingly heroic account of themselves. They went down fighting as brave martyrs to the lost cause. Terror that followed is unparalleled in modern history. It is reported that in 10 days more than thirty thousand people were slaughtered.[35] Girls with short hair were suspected as communists and were shot dead on sight in the streets. Bloody vengeance was wreaked also upon the older 'Soviet Republic' to the north-east of Canton. Thousands of peasants were hacked to death simply for being members of the unions.[36] The adventure of Canton completed the disaster. Bloody terror raged throughout the southern provinces, which only a year ago had been a scene of tremendous revolutionary awakening. Such a widespread mass movement could be so easily suppressed because it swept only the surface of the country. Reaction had not been struck at the root. It simply lay low, bowing its head before the storm but vigilantly waiting for the opportunity to pounce upon the hated enemy. The opportunity came and counter-revolution raged in mad fury throughout the year 1928. It is reported that about 35,000 communists were killed. That means practical destruction of the entire party, its élite in any case. On the other hand, petty bourgeois intellectuals who had joined the Party in the days of revolutionary enthusiasm left it by thousands under terror. The destruction of the Party was particularly complete in the cities where its social foundation lay. The few surviving communists, still clinging to the theory of the offensive, withdrew to the mountainous region at the centre of South China.

Towards the end of 1928, establishment of 'Soviet Republic' and victory of the 'Red Army' were reported from that region. The substratum of fact behind those cheery reports was the revival of the peasants' movement. Communists placed themselves at the head of that revival and painted it red. But the social character of a movement cannot be changed through the affixation of inappropriate nomenclatures. The 'Soviet State' and 'Red Army' are specifically organs of the proletarian dictatorship, created by the proletariat in the struggle for power and after the capture of power. Peasant revolt taking place under the conditions of pre-capitalist production, with no connection with the industrial centres, can create neither a Soviet State nor the Red Army. It is a democratic movement and as such should be promoted with the corresponding programme and appropriate slogans, even when it is led by communists. Fraudulent red stamps harm it. They restrict its sweep, terrifying and creating suspicions in the social elements, bound to be drawn into the democratic revolution.

Throughout the year 1929, the activities of the 'Red Armies', that is peasants' guerrilla bands increased and the establishment of a number of 'Soviet Republics' was reported from the central region of south China. The peasants had clearly not been crushed as much as the workers in the cities. The ruin of feudal–patriarchal economy, superimposed by modern capitalist exploitation (in the form of colonial plunder), had completely destituted millions and millions of peasants. Previously, these provided the basis for militarism. Anybody could get together thousands of unemployed peasants into an 'army' which would be allowed to feed and pay itself by looting. The conditions also made for banditry and piracy along the coast. The movement of 1925–7 infused some political consciousness even into the remotest villages of the southern and central provinces. Since then peasant masses could be agitated with economic demands and mobilized into a revolutionary movement. This being the condition prevailing throughout a vast area, counter-revolutionary terror could be effective only temporarily. It is physically impossible to suppress destitute and desperate masses over a vast area. It is more so owing to the utter absence of the means of transportation in southern China. To move armed forces over hundreds and hundreds of miles with no railways and no roads is an extremely difficult task. Besides, the troops themselves are not reliable, when they come too close to the insurgent peasantry. Often troops sent against the peasant guerrilla bands went over to them.

The revival of the peasant uprising assumed gigantic proportions towards the end of 1929. It surged through the rich province of Hunan, spread southward well into Kwangtung, and extended alarmingly to Kiangsi on the East and Kwangsi on the West. But it was checked at Changsha, the capital of Hunan and again thrown back. The crushing defeat of 1927 destroyed the equilibrium of the forces of revolution. The proletariat, owing to geographical position and numerical smallness, was more thoroughly beaten than the peasantry. The urban petty bourgeoisie also were more demoralized than the peasant masses. Counter-revolution consolidated its position in the towns, whereas its victory in the vast countryside was partial and temporary. Consequently the peasantry recovered, while the proletariat still lay prostrate under the iron heel of counter-revolution, and the urban petty bourgeois masses languished in a state of demoralizing confusion, owing to a lack of revolutionary leadership. The mighty wave of peasant uprising in 1929–30 found little response in the towns. The efforts for a strike of the railway workers to prevent the transportation of troops failed.

The peasantry by itself can never make a revolution, even when led by communists, unless they function as the vanguard of the proletariat, not only in theory but *actually engaged in the struggle*, occupying the forefront. The communist leaders of the peasant uprising in 1929–30 were the vanguard only in theory, the proletariat lying prostrate out of the combat. Not operating primarily from its social basis, the Communist Party ceased to be itself except in name.[37] This happened to the C. P. of China in 1929 just when it was establishing 'Soviet Republics', creating 'Red Armies', and declaring that the Chinese Society was in the throes of the proletarian revolution. According to the report of its Central Committee, by that time the Party had not only recovered from the defeat completely; it had indeed left well behind the high watermark reached in the beginning of 1927. The Party claimed to have a membership of 135,000, obviously a great exaggeration, unless all the troops of the 'Red Armies' were counted as members of the C. P. The significant fact, however, was that only about 5,000 of this vast membership were in the towns. As this latter number included intellectuals and other recruits from the petty bourgeoisie, the proletariat constituted only a minute fraction of the membership of the C. P. It was further admitted in the same report, that the party activities in large industrial centres, even in Shanghai, the original home of the C. P., were very unsatisfactory. So the C. P. had undergone a veritable metamorphosis. It had ceased to be the party of the proletariat, and become a peasant party.[38] Still it claims to be leading the proletarian revolution. It is a queer lesson for a Marxist to learn: a peasants' party leading the proletarian revolution. Even Bernstein did not propose such profound a revision of Marxism.

A peasants' party can make no revolution, unless it were under the leadership of the proletariat, actually occupying the forefront of the struggle; but under that relation of classes in the revolutionary struggle a peasants' party does not come into existence. The most advanced peasants individually enter the party of the proletariat, but the peasantry as a class does not swamp the Communist Party. When this happens, it is clear that the proletariat it not playing its role. That was the case with the Chinese proletariat in 1929–30. The defeat of 1927 had disabled the proletariat from playing the role of leading the peasantry in the revolutionary uprising. In the absence of actual proletarian leadership, the peasant uprising of 1929–30 was bound to subside, as it did.

The relation of classes involved in the revolution has scarcely changed even now. The equilibrium, disturbed by the defeat, will not be re-established before the proletariat comes to its own again, and the Communist Party becomes the Party of the Proletariat, not only in name but in composition and by virtue of its activities. For this, the adventurous theory of offensive must be discarded; the fact that China is still in the stage of national democratic revolution must be recognized, and the tactics of the C. P. should be such as to mobilize the democratic masses under proletarian hegemony. Giving up the romantic pastime of setting up 'Soviet Republics' in the inaccessible mountainous fastnesses, the C. P. must focus its attention upon the political and industrial nerve-centres of the country. It must mobilize the proletariat again in action. The peasants will be always there as the vast reserve of revolutionary energy. None but the proletariat will ever be able to draw upon that reserve, for no other class is in a position to solve the agrarian problem of China.

Notes

[34] The insurrectionary troops which had been driven out of Nanchang occupied Swatow on 24 September under the leadership of Yeh T'ing. But they were again put to flight by the much stronger army of Chang Fa-K'uei. R. C. North, *Moscow and the Chinese Communists*, pp. 114–15. SNR.

[35] Under Stalin's instruction the Canton uprising was directed by Heinz Neumann. According to Li Ang's account, 'nearly everyday the Comintern sent one or two cables urging Canton and other cities to initiate insurrections . . . even if they were certain to fail?' (*The Red Stage*, in Chinese, Ch. IV). The Communists were in control of Canton for two days only (11 and 12 Dec.) but on the third day the city was captured by Chang Fa-K'uei's troops. Many contemporary documents and photographs relating to the Canton commune and the tragic events of 1927 are preserved in the J. C. Huston Collection of Hoover Institute, Stanford. SNR.

[36] After the defeat at Swatow, some of the remnants withdrew to the Hai-lu-feng district of the Kwangtung province where a communist-led peasant Soviet had been formed under the leadership of P'eng P'ai. This too was attacked by Chang Fa-k'uei and 'thousands of peasant soldiers were killed'. Those who survived were led by Chu Teh to Chingkangshan, where Mao had retreated after the failure of the Autumn Harvest uprising. SNR.

[37] According to the 'Letter from the Central Committee of the CCP to all Party Members', in early 1930 'elements which could possibly be labelled working class totalled only 8 per cent of CCP membership while the number of industrial workers was still smaller, accounting for only 2 per cent of the Party membership'. North, *Moscow and the Chinese Communists*, p. 132.

[38] According to the *Report on the Activity of the Communist International,* March–Nov. 1926, p. 118, 'near the end of 1926, at least 66 per cent of Chinese Communist Party membership could be classed as proletarian. Another 22 per cent were intellectuals. Only 5 per cent were peasants.' In three years the party had changed from primarily proletarian to primarily peasant in composition. SNR.

Chapter XIV

The Nanking Government has failed to tackle the agrarian problem. It never wanted to do it. But as long as the agrarian problem remains unsolved, all its bombastic plans of uniting and modernizing China will miscarry, as has been the case until now. The antiquated relation of property in land and the primitive mode of production associated with it are ruinous for the economic life of the country. Colonial exploitation and the prosperity of its native agents are based upon those ruinous conditions, which breed militarism as an ugly by-product. The Nanking Government is closely associated with all these factors. It sought and has received the benediction of foreign imperialism for which a high price has to be paid. The Nanking Government is entirely dependent upon the financial support of the Shanghai compradores, the agents of imperialist exploitation. Lastly, the Nanking Government is obliged to leave the militarist chiefs absolute rulers of their respective domains in order to secure their formal agreement to the unification of the country, under its nominal sovereignty. Its victories against recalcitrant warlords, like Feng Yu-hsiang or Yen Hsi-shan have been very costly, but entirely pyrrhic.

Feudal economy splits up the vast country into a series of isolated local markets, the monopoly over which is maintained by military dictatorships. Unification of the country is not possible except through the liquidation of the antiquated feudal economy. In other words, a thoroughgoing agrarian revolution sweeping clean the stinking debris of the past on which the ghostly skeleton of Father Confucius is enshrined, is essential for national unification and modernizing of China. Can this task be ever accomplished by a government which rose out of the betrayal of the agrarian revolution? Certainly not. The Nanking Government thrives on the prostrate and mangled body of the revolution which alone can bring order out of the chaos in China. The revolution is a historical necessity. The future of the great Chinese people depends upon it. Therefore it can be defeated, but not destroyed. It will again march forward majestically, as soon as the proletariat will have recovered from the effects of the disastrous defeat, and created a leadership with courage to learn from experience.[39]

Note

[39] *China in Revolt* ends here. In *My Experience in China* (1938) Roy added two more pages commenting very briefly on developments between 1931 and 1937, and again warning the Chinese Communists and the Comintern leadership against 'romantic adventurism', on the one hand, and opportunistic retreat, on the other. The English edition of *Revolution and Counter-revolution in China* (pub. 1948) added two final chapters and a short epilogue to the German edition (1930) of that work, analysing and interpreting developments of the period between 1931 and 1945. SNR.

OUR TASK IN INDIA (1932)

The Programme submitted by Manabendra Nath Roy for National Workers of India and as adopted by the Revolutionary Working Class Party The Communist Party in India

Published by
The Central Committee of the R. W. C. P.

Introductory editorial note

The manuscript of *China in Revolt* was written, copied and smuggled out of Kanpur (Cawnpore) District Jail by M. N. Roy late in 1931. At the end of his trial Roy was sentenced in January 1932 to twelve years' transportation (which in effect meant twelve years' rigorous imprisonment). He was then transferred to Central Prison, Bareilly. One of his first acts from 'his new home' (as he called the prison in his letter of 18 January 1932 to his future wife Ellen Gottschalk), was to pen surreptitiously a second document of some length and have it smuggled out to his followers outside. The second major illegal piece of work was *Our Task in India*, and it was sent to and published by Tayab Shaikh, Roy's principal lieutenant of that period.

Under jail regulations Roy was initially entitled to write only one letter a month, and he was allowed only one sheet of paper for that purpose (M. N. Roy, *Letters from Jail*, 1943, pp. 13–4). That throughout his prison years he managed nevertheless to maintain an almost uninterrupted flow of his illegal writings reaching his associates outside bears witness as much to his indomitable will and lifelong training as an underground revolutionary as to his personal charisma. According to the Report of the Director of the Intelligence Bureau, 'although he [Roy] has been in jail since 1931, he seems to have found no difficulty in writing and secretly circulating a series of letters of encouragement and instruction to his disciples and to those Congressmen amongst whom he and they were working' (Horace Williamson, *India and Communism*, 1933, 1935; Editions Indian rpt. 1976, p. 219). The Director estimated that even from behind prison bars Roy exercised very considerable influence on the radical forces in Indian politics, especially organized labour and the left wing in the Congress. He referred to a Memorandum of early 1933 and two earlier reports of 1931–2 prepared by the leadership of the official Communist Party of India for 'perusal by the authority in Moscow' that attributed 'the very active Roy opposition' as one of the reasons for the decline of the official CPI. 'All the unions over which the Party [CPI] had previously held control had passed into the hands of their adversaries, the Roy group' (Williamson, pp. 176–7). Moscow sent several emissaries to India to counteract Roy's influence. In December 1930 it published in *Inprecor* and later in the London *Daily Worker* the 'Draft Platform of Action of the Communist Party of India'. Subsequently *Inprecor* published an 'Open Letter to the CPI' from the Communist Parties of China, Great Britain, and Germany. The *Platform* and the *Open Letter* explicated the new ultra-left line of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern that Roy had totally rejected. The tasks of the CPI, according to Moscow, included 'violent overthrow of British rule', 'establishment of a Soviet government', and taking every measure for 'preserving and strengthening the conspirative kernel of an all-India illegal, centralized Communist Party'.

How Roy's illegal writings reached the 'Royists' during this period was subsequently described by Ellen Roy. Convicts, warders, even many prison officials could not but admire this utterly selfless prisoner who was a legendary figure of revolutionary movements in many lands. They often took risks to help him. 'The fact of his secret contact with outside world', recounted Ellen,

> could of course not remain hidden, and caused his jailors much embarrassment with their superiors. But they would never find out the channels of the secret traffic. Once when he was directly challenged by a Superintendent of one of the jails, he replied that, if there was anything of the kind happening, it was the jailor's job to find out, and it was none of the duties of a prisoner to do the job of his jailor; for that he should go to his subordinates, who ought to know. Upon that the frustrated official burst out: 'That is the whole trouble: the damned lot is all in league with you.' 'That is your worry', was the reply, 'and none of my business' . . . When once things became too hot, an ingenious sweeper manufactured an airtight cylinder in which he smuggled out letters hidden in the conservancy drum . . . He [Roy] always retained a great gratitude for these secret allies of his in jail. In later years we came across a few of them . . . it was like a cordial re-union of friends or relations. [*The World Her Village, A Book of Ellen Roy*, ed. Sibnarayan Ray, 1979, pp. 294–5].

The recepient of the smuggled manuscript, Tayab Ali Shaikh, was the central figure of the 'Royist' group until he was displaced by V. B. Karnik. He belonged to the small Bohra sect of Muslims, but by nature and inclination he was a radical, and from his early youth he was committed to independent thinking and social justice. He had taken an active part in the Bardoli No-Tax Campaign. He obtained a scholarship and went to Germany to study electrical engineering, where in 1929 he met Roy and became his disciple. He was Secretary of the Hindusthan Association of Central Europe, and *The Lessons of the Lahore Congress*, written by Roy, was issued and published under the signatures of Shaikh and others (see *Selected Works of M. N. Roy, Vol. III*). He introduced Sunder Kabadi to Roy, and together with Brajesh Singh of Kalakankar, Dr Anadi Bhaduri, and Sunder Kabadi constituted the core of the 'Royist' group of Indians after Roy's break with the Comintern. At Roy's suggestion, they tried to form the German Branch of the Indian National Congress in Berlin. Roy sent all four of them to India to prepare the ground for his own return. Of the four, only Shaikh proved to be very active, competent, and reliable. He brought with him a Manifesto written by Roy, addressed to the 'Revolutionary Vanguard of the Toiling Masses of India' (see *Selected Works, Vol. III*). After his arrival, a Royist group was formed in Bombay that included Maniben Kara, C. Y. Chitnis, V. B. Karnik, A. N. Shetty, M. R. Shetty, Charles Mascarenhas, and a few others.

During the seven months that Roy was able to work underground, he organized through Shaikh 'the Committee of Action for Independence of India', later named 'League of Indian Independence'. With Bombay as base, units were set up in Calcutta, Ahmedabad, Nagpur, and a few other places. The 'Royists' became very active in the trade union movement, and soon gained control of several trade unions. In July 1931, when the All-India Trade Union Congress met at Calcutta, the official Communists found themselves outnumbered and outmanoeuvred, and broke away to form a separate central body called the Red Trade Union Congress. The AITUC passed a censure resolution against the Communists, and the new Executive Committee that was elected had Tayab Shaikh as one of its secretaries (P. S. Gupta, *A Short History of All-India Trade Union Congress*, p. 195). The new President, R. S. Ruikar, two of the Vice-Presidents, G. L. Kandalkar and J. N. Mitra, and the new General Secretary, Mukund Lal (Sarkar), were at that time well-known sympathizers of the 'Royists'. Roy had the satisfaction of receiving reports of these developments before his arrest on 21 July.

To escape the police net in Bombay, Shaikh now decided to make Calcutta his base, and there he managed to gather over thirty people under 'the Committee of Action' umbrella. Here too he had the Intelligence Branch people after him, but he had mastered the principles and techniques of underground organization from his mentor, Roy. The nature of the activities of the 'Royists' at Calcutta and the circumstances of the publication of *Our Task in India* may be partly reconstructed from some of the letters that Shaikh wrote to his Bombay comrades in 1932 and which fortunately are preserved in the M. N. Roy Archives in New Delhi. The Committee of Action for Independence was the broad and legally open platform where nationalists of radical orientation were brought together; recruits were made there for the contemplated Revolutionary Party of the Indian Working Class or RPIWC. The principal activities were trade union work and publication (largely illegal) of Roy's letters, articles, manifestos, etc, smuggled out of jail. *The Masses*, revived by Roy after his return to India, continued publication for a while. I have not been successful in tracing copies of the Indian edition, published from Calcutta, but I have managed to obtain photocopies of the German translations of material from this clandestine periodical which did appear, after a short interval, in the Communist Opposition press (See *Selected Works of M. N. Roy, Vol.III*).

Shaikh's letter of 2 June reported that

> more than 30,000 leaflets, in the shape of *Manifesto*, *Revolt*: the organ of the Committee of Action, *An Appeal to Students*, *Appeal to Railway Workers* (in vernacular language as well as English), *The Masses*, were published and distributed throughout the city and suburbs, as well as in the districts. We have even been able to extend our activities through this literature to Bihar and Orissa. There a Committee of Action for Independence is being organized.

In his letters Shaikh also mentioned efforts being made to achieve trade union unity on the basis of the Platform of Unity that Roy had prepared shortly before his arrest. There had been general support of the Platform at the AITUC executive meeting at Nagpur in May 1932; in July over a hundred trade unions sent delegates to a unity conference at Madras; and while unity continued to elude the trade Union movement, the 'Royists' considerably improved their position in the leadership of the All-India Trade Union Congress. The Twelfth Session of the AITUC met at Madras in September 1932 under the Presidentship of Jatindra Nath Mitra who had become a Royist. Among other Royists in leading positions in the AITUC were Sudhin Pramanik, Rajani Mukherji, C. Y. Chitnis, V. B. Karnik, and Maniben Kara (who presided over the Fifteenth Session of the AITUC at Bombay in May 1936). According to the Intelligence Bureau's report, by 1933 the trade union activities of the Royists 'covered the cities of Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Nagpur, while a foothold had also been obtained in Assam, the United Provinces and Bihar and Orissa, and also in several of the smaller towns in Bombay and the Central Provinces' (Horace Williamson, *India and Communism*, p. 205).

In his letter of 2 June Shaikh also informed the Bombay group that the Programme ('Our Task in India') had already been 'sent to the press, certain portion of it has been already composed and printer has stopped working, and some money which was paid in advance will go to dogs'. The problems of clandestine publication were many, as always and everywhere, not the least being the unreliability of any printing press that agreed to take the risk. Lack of money was a constant headache, and in addition there was 'the continued hunt carried by the Calcutta police to find me [Shaikh] out'. However, 'there are persons who have understood the cause, who have sympathy with us and with our Comrade (now in Bareilly), and who are determined to assist me, and therefore it has [been] possible to stay for a long time'. It seems that some money sent by Miss K. (Maniben Kara) through (Dr C. Y.) Chitnis did not reach Shaikh. But while the financial resources were very slender and the strain of underground existence was considerable, 'our Comrade [Roy] has left with us enough material [publishable manuscripts] for us to carry on', and more were being received. Shaikh mentioned that 115 copies of the first issue of *The Masses* had been sent to addresses in Bombay, that the second issue was being brought out shortly, and that for publication of 'Our Task' money was urgently needed since 'the printer would not do further unless he is paid'. Shaikh's mailing address at this time was care of P. K. Chatterji, Bengal Steam Laundry Co. Ltd., Ritchie Road, Ballygunge, Calcutta, and his own cover name was Mr Singh.

In his next letter (16 June 1932), Shaikh indicated that 'Our Task', in print, would be '130 pages of the size of *China in Revolt*' (his estimate proved to be almost completely accurate—the printed edition consisted of 125 pages plus VIII pages of 'Foreword') and that 'the cost of printing will amount to Rs 150 for 1000 copies'. It was absolutely necessary to bring it out 'by the end of July as to make it available for our conference', and Maniben Kara must 'make some arrangement about money so that the work may be taken up immediately'. Shaikh also reported that he and his colleagues were 'setting up the Labour Research Institute' at Calcutta which 'will be affiliated to the Labour Research Bureau, Bombay' to provide the 'Royists' with 'some legal platform'. His new mailing address was C/o B. S. Verma, *Vishal Bharat*, 120–2 Upper Circular Road, Calcutta. *Vishal Bharat* was a distinguished Hindi journal forming part of the highly reputed and influential periodical establishment, *Prabasi* (in Bengali) and *The Modern Review*, founded, owned and edited by the veteran journalist Ramananda Chatterji.

The next letter (20 June) which is quite long (six very closely typed single space foolscap sheets) discussed certain internal problems, misunderstandings, and conflicts among the 'Royists' in Bombay and Calcutta, and emphasized that if Bombay claimed to be 'the seat of the Committee for the organization of the Party' then it must also have the responsibility of meeting the initial expenses of work in other provinces. 'The comrades in U. P. have devoted all their material resources' to meet the initial legal costs of Roy's defence. *The Masses*, which 'was not a local affair', was being published with resources mobilized by the Calcutta group. So far Bombay had sent only Rs 50 towards cost of work at Calcutta. 'The question of printing the programme [Our Task] is certainly not a local affair. Before Madras it should be ready; otherwise I do not know what you will all do.' The letter also explained why the Royists, instead of calling themselves the 'Organizing Committee of the Communist Party', had chosen the nomenclature 'Committee for the Organization of the Revolutionary Party of the Indian Working Class'.

In another longish letter (8 Aug. 1932), Shaikh advised Bombay that the printing of the full text of 'Our Task' had been completed, 'but we have not made the full payment. We have yet to pay Rs 60. These books are for sale and not for free distribution. Therefore we would like to know from you how many copies you can sell over there . . . The price of the book will Rs 1/8 (annas). It is published illegally.' A local Committee of RPIWC had already been established at Calcutta, and he proposed that 'the Organizing Committee' be transformed into 'the Provisional Central Committee of the RPIWC', 'which will be responsible for All-India activity'. The issue of *The Masses* which 'was to come out in the middle of June' was still held up in the press; from the next issue it 'will come out as the organ of the provisional Central Committee'. In a postscript he again asked for Rs 60 from Bombay, and proposed that 'Our Task' should include a 'Foreword or Introduction'. The letter of 26 August proposed that the Bombay comrades should at least send Rs 50 towards the printing bill, which they would reimburse themselves by deducting the amount subsequently from the sales proceeds of the copies that were sent to them.

That is the last letter from Shaikh in 1932 in the M. N. Roy Archives so we do not know exactly how the press bill was met. But *Our Task* did come out with a Foreword dated September 1932 from the Bengal Committee of the RPIWC. The Foreword mentioned that 'at a conference held recently consisting of the representatives from different provinces this programme as submitted by Comrade M. N. Roy was accepted and different provincial organizations have been set up to carry on the activities of the party'. There was no printer's line, but the brick red front cover boldly announced 'the Central Committee of the RWCP' as its publisher.

An underground publication, the book was replete with errors of omission and commission—of spelling, grammar, syntax, missing letters, words and phrases. Since the meaning was however quite clear, it has been possible in most cases to reconstruct garbled words and sentences and make the necessary corrections with minimal alterations. Sheer considerations of space have forced me to leave out a few passages. Such omissions or abridgements have been indicated in each case by the usual ellipsis (. . .) Emphasis given to words or sentences in the 1932 edition has been retained in this edition. The foreword, which was probably contributed by Shaikh, has been omitted.

Although he had broken with the Communist International and published detailed criticism of its organization and policy in the Opposition press, Roy was still very much a Marxist–Leninist when he wrote *Our Task*. After his return to India he realized that he would have virtually to start from scratch—to train a new generation of Indians in the theory and practice of Marxism–Leninism and its application to India. The programme that he wrote and smuggled out of jail was in one sense a kind of a primer that combined an exposition of terms and concepts essential to Marxian analysis, a highlighting of the basic problems of contemporary Indian society, a critique of imperialism and the crisis brought about by its contradictions, an assessment of the freedom movement, and detailed proposals to give life and meaning to the freedom struggle. The argument led up to the programme of national democratic agrarian revolution that would ensure socio–economic emancipation and political power to the people together with full independence. The key proposal of the document was 'the election of the *National Constituent Assembly* by the committee of the oppressed classes'. The programme ended with an optimistic prognosis of the radical transformations in economy, polity, social organization, and cultural life that would be brought about by the revolution.

Our Task is an important work for any general understanding of M. N. Roy's position as a Marxist–Leninist.

SNR.

Section I

1. *Introductory Observations*

From time to time various theories were advanced regarding the origin of human society. On the strength of each, particular codes and canons were laid down for the regulation of social relations. Until the epoch-making discoveries of Natural Science, all the theories about the origin of human society were rooted in religion. Consequently, laws for governing social conduct were promulgated either on the authority of a Godhead or of an abstract Moral Principle. Later on, the 'democratic' doctrine of the sovereignty of the people came to be the authority of legislation. Reason replaced God as a condition for the challenge to the divine right of kings. But even then, great ignorance prevailed regarding the origin and evolution of society.

The origin of society could be discovered in the darkness of antiquity, and the long process of human evolution clearly visualized through the wilderness of time only in the light of science, shed in the nineteenth century. The biological discoveries of Darwin definitely cleared away the religious prejudices shrouding the origin of man. The researches of Lewis Morgan threw a flood of light upon the character and constitution of the primitive human society. Hegel raised history to the level of science which revealed human society as in constant progress. Finally, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels developed the Materialist conception of history. It became evident that man was not a sinner driven out of heaven by an angry God; that human society did not originate with the blessed survivors from the latest periodically succeeding cataclysms; that no arbitrary Supreme Being created the phenomenal universe in a fit of playfulness; that social relations are guided neither by a divine will nor by an abstract conception of morality; and that the origin and evolution of human society had material causes.

The human being is the culminating point of the process of biological evolution. Man is the animal which, in the struggle for existence, goes beyond organic adaptation and makes use of weapons outside its own physical organism. The animal grows fur to protect itself against cold. For the same purpose, the primitive man finds something to cover his body with—leaves, or the bark of a tree, skins, and finally manufactured fabrics. The primitive man no longer requires sharp teeth and claws as the carnivorous animals do. He invents stone flints, bow and arrow for killing his prey. The monkey needs long and agile limbs for swinging from a branch; when an animal breaks a branch and uses it as an instrument for shaking down fruits, the forefather of the primitive man comes into being. The ability to use an object outside the physical organism as a weapon in the struggle for existence puts an end to the long process of organic adaptation. In short, the descent, or more correctly speaking, the ascent of man coincides, on the one hand, with the termination of the process of organic adaptation, and on the other hand, with the beginning of the new process of the struggle for the conquest of nature.

The exigencies of the struggle against the forces of nature oblige the primitive man to seek company and cooperation of his fellow being. The earliest kind of human society comes into existence. The congregation takes place first for hunting, then for herding domesticated animals, and finally for cultivating the earth. So society originates with the application of labour to the available natural resources for the production of something new. Man is not the creation of an angry, or arbitrary, or playful God. The ability to create distinguishes man from other animals. Consequently, the modes and means of applying human labour for production determine social relations not only in the dawn of history, but all throughout the successive stages of human progress. Religious canons, moral codes, and civic laws are evolved from time to time for establishing and maintaining a particular system of social relations growing out of the conditions of production of the given epoch. There is no eternal law governing human conduct in all time, under all conditions. There is no divine hand guiding man's destiny. There is no supernatural will or principle to which everything in the phenomenal world conforms.

Although man begins to congregate already in the stage of savagery, the foundation of human society is firmly laid only when he learns to make the earth bear fruit by cultivating it. This epoch-making knowledge closed the period of migration in search of food and of grazing ground for the domesticated animals. Groups of mankind settle down on particular localities, and the organization of society definitely begins. Each group marks out a territory as its collective domain. The land is cultivated by the joint labour of the entire community. This mode of production determines the primitive relations of the members of the community. The fruits of collective labour belong equally to all. There is no distinction between mine and thine.

Settled conditions gradually increase the productivity of human labour. Primitive tools are invented. These new means of production interfere with the collective performance of labour. Those inventing them work with them individually, and become primitive owners of the produce of their labour. Private property originates. Gradually the community ceases to have common interest. Thus there arises the necessity for laws to govern the relation of members of society having diverse interests. But there must be some authority to lay down the laws. Religion supplies this authority by setting up one or more superhuman forces. All the Lawgivers of the antiquity are 'seers' supposed to have been inspired by some divine vision. Ignorance regarding elemental phenomena like the sun, moon, fire, rain, etc. provides the basis for ascribing divinity to them. There begins the speculation after the great cause of everything, and the presence of an omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient being is assumed as the supreme authority laying down laws governing the conduct of the mortals. The object of these laws is, however, entirely mundane. It is to protect the newly-created private property, and to establish those possessing it as the ruling class.

In course of time private property extends to land, the chief means of production in the past. The fruits of land cultivated with privately manufactured and therefore privately owned tools, remain in private ownership. So, for all practical purposes, the land thus cultivated ceases to be common property. Primitive communist society breaks up into clans, composed of a number of patriarchal families. The ownership of land is assumed by the clan chiefs who, in course of time, grow into feudal lords expropriating the free cultivator of the land. Or, on the basis of patriarchal families, there rises the sacerdotal kingship claiming absolute right over everything by virtue of its supposed divine prerogative. In any case, the society completely ceases to be the congregation of free men.

The society splits up into classes with divergent interests. Those usurping the ownership of land—the chief means of production—maintain their domination by setting up a political authority on the basis of the divine right of the king. The function of religion, philosophy, and law is to defend the established order.

The division of society into classes with divergent interests inevitably promotes class struggle. The struggle which goes on continuously in the class-ridden society breaks out periodically into gigantic revolutions destroying an old and decayed social order and establishing a new one. A particular social order is based on a definite mode of production. Therefore it is threatened with destruction as soon as a new mode of production begins to develop inside it. Naturally the rulers of the old order try to limit and even crush the nascent force of progress, but it is bound to go down in the struggle to hold up the inexorable process of social evolution.

The primitive communist society is based on the cultivation of land with joint labour. It is disrupted by the development of handicraft production which makes the individual producer the owner of the produce of his labour, because he owns the tools, the means of production, privately. The social order based upon the private ownership of the means of production reaches its climax in the capitalist system.

Various modes of production, that is, how labour is applied, develop, and disappear successively in the long intervening period.

In the earliest period of social evolution, taking place on the basis of property, labour is performed in slavery which assumes different outward forms under different conditions prevailing in different parts of the world. The essence of slavery is the employment of labour in return for the barest means of subsistence. In India slavery did not assume the classical form as in the west Asiatic and Mediterranean countries. But a very large element of it is to be found in the original caste system. The Aryan conquerors made practical slavery of the conquered Dravidians. Remnants of slavery still linger in the Indian social system. The hateful custom of untouchability is the ugly relic of the Dravidian aborigines.

Slavery leads to labour being forcibly concentrated more and more on the production of luxuries and construction of useless temples and monuments. Labour having no or little value is naturally squandered by the slave owners. Necessary production, particularly agriculture, is starved owing to the forced withdrawal of labour. The entire system of economy loses balance. A severe crisis overtakes society. The mode of production based upon slavery breaks down.

Slavery having had not assumed the classical form in India, the collapse of the antique social order was not so spectacular as in Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt, or not even as in Greece and Rome. But the Buddhist revolt did severely shake the ancient Brahmanic order. After several hundred years, Brahmanic reaction appeared to have overwhelmed the revolution. What was restored, however, was the old only in name, but entirely new in substance. Theocratic kingship was not to be revived. The new Hindu kings were incipient feudal monarchs with large patriarchal attributes.

Thus, out of the ruins of the antique society based upon slave labour, there arises the feudal social order with a new mode of production. The germs of the new grows already in the womb of the old, hastening its disruption. Private property in land, created already in the antique epoch, lays the foundation of feudal production. In the new social order, labour is performed in serfdom which replaces the older system of slavery.

In India, serfdom also did not take the classical form as in mediaeval Europe. But it was there essentially. The essence of feudal production is that the peasant cultivates the land with his own tools but is obliged to deliver to the owner of the land all the product over and above what is necessary for his bare subsistence and reproduction. This system of exploitation obtained in India not only in the past; it largely governs the agricultural production even today.

Finally, capitalist mode of production develops within the feudal social order. A new period of social revolution sets in. Between the feudal landlord and the peasant held in serfdom, there arises a new class of traders. Besides, there are those engaged in handicraft. By keeping the peasantry, practically the entire population of the epoch, on the level of bare subsistence, feudalism obstructs the expansion of handicraft. But it cannot successfully check the rise of the trader. For, without his intervention, feudal dues wrung from the peasantry in kind cannot be converted into wealth. If there is trade, there is profit. So the trader gets rich, in spite of all feudal restrictions and oppression. He invests his accumulated wealth in handicraft which develops, threatening feudal absolutism. The limit is soon reached. The new mode of production cannot be firmly established, unless labour is free to move away from land, and a certain part of the surplus produce of agriculture remains in possession of the peasant. Feudalism is fortified by the absolute monarchist state. This is overthrown by the bourgeois revolution, and the capitalist order of society is largely established.

Wage labour is the basis of capitalist production. The overthrow of the feudal system frees the peasant from land. He is no longer obliged to toil on his lord's land. He is 'free' to become a wage slave, to sell his labour power in the competitive market. This means a great accession of strength to the manufacturing industry, concentrated in the towns. Free supply of labour enables the owners of the new means of production to purchase labour power at the lowest price. Capital begins to accumulate at an ever-increasing rate.

Wealth is not capital. Wealth becomes capital when it is applied for stimulating production; when it becomes the means for the application of labour to the natural resources so that new value is created. Capital accumulates by depriving the producer of a portion of the value created by his labour. So, the lower the price of labour power, that is wages, the higher the rate of accumulation of capital. Accumulated capital is reinvested for exploiting labour, thereby multiplying itself *ad infinitum*.

Originally, man applies his labour to the available resources of nature for producing what he needs for his subsistence. Growth of private property changes the original purpose of production. The product of human labour becomes commodity for exchange, so that the owner of the means of production can make profit. The exchange first takes place directly, then through various natural mediums introduced in the system from time to time; finally, money comes into use as the legal medium for the exchange of commodities. Under capitalism, production altogether loses its original purpose. It takes place exclusively for profit to be made not by the producer, but by the owner of the means of production who completely ceases to be a producer.

Labour creates all value that can be exchanged. A table, for example, fetches higher price than the wood out of which it is made. Whence does it acquire this increased value? From the labour employed in manufacturing it. If the worker possesses his own tools, the entire new value created by his labour remains his. He produces the table and it belongs to him. He realizes the value either through exchange or sale (which is exchange through the medium of money). Under capitalism the producer works with tools owned by others who pay him wages. The object of the owner of the means of production (tools, machinery, factories, land, etc.) is to make profit. This can be done only by depriving the producer of a part of the value created by his labour. So, profit represents unpaid labour.

The system of production for profit drives capitalism eventually into a vicious circle of contradictions. Under capitalism, forces of production develop tremendously. In course of time, more goods are produced than can be sold at a sufficiently high profit for the capitalists. This does not mean that all the requirements of the world are satisfied. As a matter of fact, when the capitalists complain of over-production, and close down workshops, mills, factories, etc., there are actually hundreds of millions of human beings still going without the most minimum amenities of life. On the other hand, the suspension of production throws large masses of workers out of employment. In order that their wares can be sold at a profit, the capitalists reduce the cost of production. In the first place, wages are cut down, either directly, or by prolonging the working day. Then machineries are introduced to make one unit of labour produce increasingly more. This inevitably throws more workers out of employment, the standard of life of the entire working class sinks, a constantly swelling army of unemployed becomes the ugly feature of the capitalist society.

Productive employment of labour is the basis of all progress. The displacement of an ever-increasing amount of labour from the process of production, therefore, retards progress. An economic system that causes such a waste of social energy stands self-condemned as reactionary, notwithstanding the progressive significance it has had in an earlier stage of social evolution. Its overthrow, therefore, becomes a historic necessity.

To extricate itself from the vicious circle of contradictions, inherent in the system of production for exchange, capitalism enters into the stage of colonial expansion. The capitalists of each industrially developed country seek to monopolize the world market and mark out for their respective exclusive domain certain parts of the world. The competition for the domination of the world market and the scramble for colonies lead to wars which further shake the fabric of capitalist economy and involve it into sharper and more violent contradictions. The process of social evolution reaches another period of revolutionary outbreaks. The force of production must break the bonds of capitalism; otherwise, the great conquest of mankind, the accumulated creation of human labour performed throughout history, will cease to be the condition for further progress; civilization will fall in ruins.

Capitalism lays down the foundation for a higher order of society, and brings into existence a class that undertakes the historic mission of building up the new on the ruins of the old. To save civilization from collapse, the proletariat overthrows the bourgeoisie from power, and establishes the Socialist Society on the basis of the epoch-making achievements realized by mankind in the past.

The proletariat overthrows capitalism because it is the main factor in the mode of socialized production which provides the basis for a higher social order. Other elements of society are also exploited under capitalism, but none is so completely and irrevocably divorced from the institution and even tradition of private property as the proletariat; none is transformed into such a compact nucleus of the socialist order of society. A wage-earning class of capitalism can not even dream of recovering the individual ownership of the production of his labour. Factories, workshops, mills, mines, railways, ships, etc. cannot be broken up into individual private properties.

Originally, private property is created by the claim of the producer to the fruit of his individual labour. The ground for this claim disappears when labour is performed collectively through such indivisible means as modern machinery and transport. Under capitalism labour is performed ever more collectively. Thus capitalism, itself the highest form of private property, nevertheless knocks off the very bottom of the institution of private property.

Capitalism expropriates the individual producer and socializes production. Under it labour becomes an undivided and indivisible social factor. Today any one piece of manufactured article contains the labour performed in far-off parts of the world by workers belonging to all races and nationalities, and under diverse conditions of production. But all the means of this socialized (on a world scale) production and distribution, land, machineries, factories, mills, mines, railways, ships, banks, etc. are owned by a small class having absolutely nothing to do with the actual process of production. Hence arises all the contradictions of the situation.

There are plenty of machineries (or possibilities for building them) to produce goods for satisfying the needs of everybody. Still the most minimum requirements of the majority are not satisfied. Hundreds of millions hunger for the most elementary amenities of life. But the mills and factories often stand idle, and more are not built. Tens of millions of workers are deprived of the possibility of earning their daily bread by the sweat of their brow. The small parasitic class of owners of the means of production and distribution will not have them to function to their fullest capacity because in that case the rate of profit will diminish.

Obviously, the elimination of the single factor of disturbance is demanded for the further progress of humanity. The expropriation of the expropriators becomes a historic necessity. The disappearance of this factor will bring production back to its original purpose—to meet the requirements of the community. Then there will be no more limitation either to production or to the continued growth of the forces of production so necessary in the industrially backward countries like India. On the one hand, the needs of all will be progressively satisfied, and on the other, there will be employment for all. Labour being performed with the aid of modern machinery; the minimum requirements of the entire world can be met by all the able-bodied adults working only a few hours a day.

That will open up an era of great cultural and spiritual advance for the whole humanity. Everybody will have plenty of time for education, and to cultivate the finer aspects of life.

Collective ownership of all the means of collective production is the condition for the establishment of the new social order. The class of collective producers, that is, the proletariat, can alone fulfil this condition. All other victims of capitalism must follow its deadly and irreconcilable enemy. They must follow the proletariat which holds the key to a new world of unrestricted progress, untrammelled freedom, and universal prosperity.

Section II

2. *The Character of Contemporary Indian Society*

Contemporary Indian society still contains large remnants of mediaeval, and even primitive modes of production. The relation between the landlords and peasants in Malabar, Oudh, Sindh, and practically in all the Native States bears the stamp of feudalism. In other parts, particularly the North-Western Frontier Province, primitive communal ownership provides the basis for private property. Landlordism throughout the country largely represents pre-capitalist exploitation. In some parts of the country, elements of serfdom and even slavery characterize the present social relations. Nevertheless, the contemporary Indian society is essentially capitalist.

Even under normal conditions of development, capitalism does not necessarily exterminate all earlier social institutions completely. Divested of the absolute political power, and therefore its prerogatives sufficiently restricted, the landed aristocracy may be allowed to continue in this parasitic existence inside the capitalist society. For example, even today the semi-feudal aristocracy occupies a prominent place in the national economy and politics of England. The Court is heavily tinted with feudal traditions. In the most modern democratic country like Germany feudal landlords share power with the bourgeoisie.[1]

In India, the establishment of the capitalist society has not been a normal process. Feudal absolutism was destroyed not by the native bourgeoisie, but through the intervention of a foreign factor. Long before the advent of the European merchant, early forms of capitalist production had grown in India. Handicraft had ceased to be confined in the self-contained village. They [craftsmen] had largely concentrated in towns. The production was decisively for exchange. Consequently, a prosperous class of traders had become an important social factor. The forces of the bourgeois revolution were clearly on the ascendency.

This normal process of social evolution was disturbed by foreign intervention. One basic condition for the establishment of the capitalist society was, however, created. The decayed feudal absolutism was overthrown from political power. The new State set up by the foreign conqueror was an instrument of capitalist exploitation. But in order to consolidate their power, the British rulers of India in the earlier days of their domination created a new class of tax-farming landlords with more or less feudal attributes. Pre-capitalist social relations, thus galvanized, became the basis of capitalist exploitation.

The entire production of the Indian masses, no matter under however backward [conditions] and in whichever remote corner of the country it may take place, is for change not only in the internal market, as was largely the case before foreign intervention, but [also] in the competitive world market. Therefore, it is capitalist production; and trade in commodities, produced largely in precapitalist conditions, pauperizes the producers, thereby obstructing the modernization of the mode of agricultural production and the expansion of manufacturing industries.

The ballast of feudal conditions hindering the free development of the Indian economy is an integral part of colonial capitalism. In such conditions, industrial development on the basis of the capitalist mode of production is not possible. The feudal ballast can be thrown overboard only together with colonial capitalism, and then this can no longer be replaced by normal, healthy and progressive native capitalism. Because the overthrow of any kind of capitalism depends upon the capture of power by the proletariat.

This being the case, two revolutions overlap in contemporary India. The bourgeois revolution has not yet been completed, while the proletarian revolution appears on the order of the day. The latter does not depend upon the completion of the former. On the contrary, the historic task of carrying through the bourgeois revolution devolves upon the proletariat; and taking place under the leadership of the proletariat it becomes the prelude, not historically (as the bourgeois revolution under any condition is), but immediately, to the Socialist Revolution.[2]

3. *Definition of Some Social and Political Terms*

(A) LANDLORD

There are various types of landlords, practically all of which are to be found in contemporary India. The basic characteristic common to all is to receive rent from those cultivating or otherwise occupying the land.

The most parasitic, feudal type does not perform any service whatever. Its title to ownership is founded either upon the grant from the paramount power or expropriation of the original freeholder. The ownership is realized in rent which absorbs practically the entire surplus produce of the cultivator. That is, under this type of landlordism, the producer performs labour in return for the bare means of subsistence and reproduction. This is a very uneconomic system, since it kills the incentive to greater production. Why should the peasant increase the productivity of the soil, if his share is limited in any case? Besides, he cannot do so, even if he wants to, for, deprived of his entire surplus produce, he lacks the wherewithal for the purpose. This form of agrarian relation is positively antagonistic to any industrial development. The

Zemrie of Malabar, the Jagirdars of the N. W. F. Province, and all the feudatory chiefs can be placed in the category of landlords. . . .

The *zamindars* enjoying permanent settlement in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa possess a title legally rather ambiguous. They may be classed either as tax-farmers or independent rent-receivers. In any case, they are parasites also essentially of the feudal type.

The second type is the landlord holding land as a means of capitalist production. He invests capital to improve the means of production so that labour performed thereupon creates progressively greater value. Under this system, the peasant is not directly deprived of his entire surplus produce, but he pays actually much more to the landlord, for the rent is raised to include the profit for the capital invested. In India the greatest landlord of this type is the state. It owns half of British India.

The third type owns land on which dwelling houses and industrial plants are built. The rent received by the landlords of this type represents an enchroachment upon the capitalist profit; for it absorbs a part of the surplus-value created by labour.

(B) BOURGEOISIE

Originally, the town is the centre of capitalist production. Manufacturers and traders mostly inhabit there. The struggle against feudal absolutism originates in the town. The 'bourgeoisie' of the manufacturing and trading population of the town eventually overthrows the feudal aristocracy, restricting capitalist production and becomes the ruling class of the new social order.

The bourgeoisie is the class of population which individually or collectively owns all the means of capitalist production, distribution, and exchange, namely, mills, factories, workshops, mines, railways, ships, other vehicles of transport, trading concerns, banks, and land (as far as it is a means of capitalist production). In the earlier stages of its growth, the bourgeoisie remains connected with the process of production—in the very beginning as master artisan employing and exploiting journeymen and apprentices, then as foreman of workshops, and finally as manager of privately-owned industrial concerns. But with the development of capitalist production the bourgeoisie ceases to have anything to do with it. Its existence becomes superfluous. Still, it remains the owner of all the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and an evergrowing amount of wealth representing the value created by labour accumulates in its hand as capital. As directors of the all-powerful banks, huge commercial combines, and monstrous industrial corporations, the members of the bourgeoisie rule the capitalist society.

Itself representing unpaid labour, capital accumulates in the hands of the bourgeoisie as the means of further exploiting labour. More industries are built employing larger number of workers performing labour in return for wages. If the worker receives the full value of his labour (as he does when he is the owner of the means of production when he works with his tools), there will be no profit for the bourgeoisie owning capital. So the profit that is the share of the bourgeoisie is made by depriving the workers of a part of the value produced by their labour. The bourgeois society is based upon this robbery.

(C) PETTY BOURGEOISIE

There are two types of the petty bourgeoisie: small owners of private property (who are) incipient exploiters of labour; and (others) serving the capitalist system. The peasantry, in so far as they are not transformed into wage labourers on the land, belong to the first category of the petty bourgeoisie. From owning the means of production individually, they may develop into employers of labour, if other factors do not operate against them. In any case, the peasantry as a class is petty bourgeoisie, because peasants are not irrevocably divorced from the institution of private property. The aspiration of the peasant is to be the owner of the land he cultivates, and to add to it if possible. The social character of the peasantry changes only when agricultural production is socialized, that is, individual farming is abolished by the introduction of machinery which necessitates collective performance of labour.

In course of its development, capitalist production becomes monopolist, squeezing out, expropriating, and ruining the small proprietor, industrial as well as agricultural. The bankrupt petty bourgeoisie become dissatisfied with the established capitalist order; but tied to the tradition of private property, they not only hesitate to join the proletarian revolution, they—particularly the intellectual wing—even become a bulwark of reaction. In the period of capitalist decay, the petty bourgeoisie sink deeper in social degeneration. In despair, their intellectual wing take refuge in reactionary nationalist jingoism, thus providing the basis for the Fascist movement, the bloodiest weapon for suppressing the proletarian revolution.

The peasantry, however, assumes a new revolutionary significance. In the past the peasants destroyed feudal absolutism and helped the establishment of the capitalist society. In the period of capitalist decline they become a factor of the proletarian revolution. In colonial countries like India, they are a powerful anti-capitalist force, because their salvation demands the overthrow of imperialism which is the highest form of capitalist exploitation.

In India, other petty bourgeois elements—artisans, small traders, poor intellectuals—are also revolutionary factors. Discontent and revolt against imperialist oppression transform them into allies of the proletarian revolution.

(D) PROLETARIAT

The foundation of capitalist society is unpaid labour. It is performed by the proletariat, the class of population which possesses nothing whatsoever, and earns livelihood by selling its labour power. Capitalism creates the proletariat by expropriating the small handicraft producer, on the one hand, and 'freeing' the serf from feudal bondage, on the other.

The proletariat is the most revolutionary class because it has nothing to lose but its chains; not even the prejudice of private property. By its very being it is entirely divorced from private ownership of the means of production, and cannot possibly hope to acquire any. It is engaged in a process of production which is progressively specialized. It performs labour collectively. Consequently, it is the harbinger of a new social order based on the common ownership of the means of production and is the grave-digger of capitalism.

(E) REVOLUTION

When a social order, based upon a particular mode of production, exhausts all the possibilities of progress, it decays and is overthrown. Forces for this purpose grow inside the old order, showing the way to a higher level of human evolution. But the decayed old [order] does not disappear automatically without resistance. The period of transition therefore coincides with the maturing class struggle breaking out into violent conflict between the forces of reaction and progress. To overwhelm the resistance of the doomed reaction, it becomes necessary to apply force. Otherwise, the old order can violently crush the movement antagonistic to it, thus dragging on its precarious existence blocking social progress. Revolution is the destruction of the decayed old [order] and the establishment of a new social body. The decisive act is the establishment of a new state to protect and promote the nascent new.

(F) STATE

The society based upon private property is dominated by the class which, in a given period of history, owns and controls the means of production. To maintain its privileged position the ruling class creates its own organ of power. It is the state. The function of the state is to coerce and suppress all the forces antagonistic to the established social order, and consequently to the ruling class. Therefore, the state is the organ of the dictatorship of the priestly caste, or of the slave-owners. In the middle ages it was the dictatorship of the feudal nobility. In the modern capitalist epoch, it is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The emblems of the state in these three great historical epochs are respectively the sacerdotal kingship or the city republic, absolute monarchy, and parliamentary democracy.

The modern bourgeois state is supposed to be an organ of the sovereignty of the entire people. But the 'sovereign right' of the people is limited to casting vote occasionally. The theory that the government is responsible to the parliament is a fiction. This has been demonstrated in innumerable cases since the war.

The parliaments are suspended, prolonged, or dispersed whenever they become a nuisance to the executive, the latter doing the bidding of the financial magnates and industrial barons. The constitution of every democratic country provides for the open assumption of dictatorial power by the executive. In such moments of 'emergency' it becomes evident that the coercive organs of the 'democratic' state, army, navy and police, are not in the least controlled by the 'sovereign will of the people expressed through the parliament'. They always stand above the head of the parliament to coerce or to disperse it whenever it may fail to do the bidding of the ruling class, namely the bourgeoisie. As long as the bourgeoisie own and control all the means of production, distribution, and exchange, they possess dictatorial power which may not be veiled by the hypocrisy of parliamentary government.

The present Indian state is the organ of imperialist domination. No amount of 'responsibility' in the provinces as well as in the centre will essentially change its character. The introduction of 'responsibility' simply means the harnessing of the native bourgeoisie in support of imperialist dictatorship. The native bourgeoisie is given a junior partnership in the business, so to say. Supposing that the native bourgeoisie is even granted an equal share in the dictatorship, still it will remain dictatorship, and no real power will be transferred to the people. Power is never transferred voluntarily. It is captured by those who want it.

(G) COMMUNISM

Capitalism socializes production. Under it labour is performed more and more collectively. In course of time and by its very nature the private ownership of the means of production (workshops, mills, factories, etc.) concentrates in fewer and fewer hands. Monopolist ownership aggravates the contradictions inherent in capitalist economy. Industrial crisis and trade depression cease to be periodical phenomena. They become permanent, revealing the capitalist system of production for exchange (commodity production) to be a positive hindrance to further social progress. The so-called 'normal' cyclic crisis of capitalism is a crisis of 'over-production'. It disappears as soon as the accumulated commodities are cleared away through a temporary contraction of production. Workers again find employment, the creation of surplus value continues, trade recovers, and the social balance is re-established. The final crisis, which reveals the untenability of capitalism, is a crisis of under-production. Since the world war capitalist economy has reached its final stage of decay and decline.

The war was the result of imperialist rivalry which, in its turn, was the inevitable outcome of capitalist production. The contradictions of commodity production involved the capitalist society in the huge world conflagration which extremely accentuated these very contradictions. Wholesale death and destruction greatly reduced the purchasing power of the world. While the European bourgeoisie were engrossed in the fatal pastime of having masses of producers slaughtered on the battlefields, modern industry developed overseas. On the termination of the war the European bourgeoisie were confronted with new and more powerful rivals. The competition for the world market became more intense than ever. Further, the war left an unbearable burden of non-productive indebtedness on all the belligerent nations. The treaty concluding the military hostilities added to the chaos of capitalist economy. The vanquished states could not pay the indemnity payment. Intensified competition led to what is called the 'rationalization' of production, the object of which was to reduce the cost of production through the development of technical skill and introduction of labour-saving machineries. The result has been mass displacement of labour. Today there are about 20,000,000 unemployed industrial workers in the world.

On the other hand, technical improvement has tremendously increased the productive capacity of the world. At present, the industrial plants of the world can produce many times more goods than before the war but actual production lags persistently below the pre-war level. While the great majority of the human race still remains very insufficiently supplied with the most rudimentary amenities of life, and the accumulated labour of mankind has created technical means well able to supply the demand, the actual production of goods is forced down, thereby depriving millions and millions even of the right of performing labour for earning their daily bread. Supply the hundreds of millions and millions inhabiting India, China, and other backward countries with the most minimum necessities of life, provide the peasants of these countries with modern implements for cultivating land, then the industrial plants of the world will have to be run at their fullest capacity—the unemployed millions in the industrial countries will find work, and purchasing power will record an all-round increase, giving impetus to still further technical developments. The standard of living of the entire human race will rise, opening before all the road to culture and spiritual progress.

But this cannot be done as long as the means of production remains under private ownership. This does not permit production of goods, unless they can be sold and profit made. So private ownership of the means of production stands in the way to all-round human progress and prosperity; conditions for which have been created by the epoch-making conquests of man. The abolition of this institution of private ownership of the means of production, therefore, becomes a historic necessity.

Either capitalism must be overthrown or human society will sink into degradation, decomposition, and decay. This will be the inevitable result of the continued control of world economy by a small parasitic minority to satisfy their insatiable greed. The bourgeoisie would rather see accumulated achievements of mankind collapse into ruins than relax their throttling grip on the forces of production. This being the case, the overthrow of the bourgeoisie from power becomes the historic task of the epoch. The accomplishment of this task will usher in a new social order based upon the ownership of the means or production, distribution, and exchange by the entire classless community. The growth of private property split up human society into antagonistic classes. These, therefore, will disappear with the abolition of private property.

The abolition of private property does not take place subjectively. It is the outcome of an objective process of social evolution. As a matter of fact, private ownership is destroyed by capitalism which develops by expropriating the individual producer. When labour is performed more and more collectively with tools that cannot be individually possessed, the basis of private property disappears and the foundation for a new social order is laid. The germs of communism grow in the womb of the bourgeois society, capitalist mode of production rendering the return to private ownership progressively impossible. Finally, the abolition of the parasitic ownership (acquired through the expropriation of the producer) becomes necessary so that the new social order, growing in the objective process of social evolution, can be established on the ruins of the old. The expropriation of the expropriators is the task of the class which, completely divorced from private property, performing collective labour and inseparably associated with the mode of socialized production, rises as the harbinger of the communist society. That class is the proletariat.

The destruction of the bourgeois democratic state on which the capitalist society is buttressed, must necessarily precede the expropriation of the parasitic ownership of the means of socialized production. So long as the bourgeoisie retains political power, its expropriation is not possible; the modern 'democratic' state is there precisely to maintain the bourgeoisie in power. The expropriation of the expropriators is conditional upon the capture of political power by the proletariat. Then the ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange is vested in the revolutionary class in power, and the working class reinforces the old principle that the fruit of labour belongs to those who perform it. Thus the classes living upon the exploitation of labour are deprived of the basis of their existence. They disappear gradually, and in the new order every member of society performs some useful function. With the disappearance of classes the necessity for the state vanishes; communism is fully realized. Society becomes a voluntary combination of free human beings.

Owing to industrial backwardness, the foundation of the Communist Society is but partially laid in India. This, however, does not necessarily imply that a period of capitalist development is unavoidable. Normal economic development of India has been obstructed by capitalism operating as imperialist domination. The lost ground can be quickly covered and further progress made only after the overthrow of imperialism. But by overthrowing imperialism the Indian people will deal a staggering blow to the tottering structure of world capitalism. Under these circumstances, there will be no reason for their putting on the chain themselves after having contributed to its destruction. Economic development of India, free from imperialist yoke, can then take place, dispensing with the system of capitalist exploitation.

This, of course, depends upon the social character of the state that will be established after the overthrow of imperialism. If the political power passes on to the bourgeoisie, then India will launch upon the discredited road of capitalism. A social system will be built upon the exploitation of the masses, only to degenerate and be pulled down in course of time. It is, however, very unlikely that such a development will take place, for, the Indian bourgeoisie is so much tied up with the system of colonial exploitation that it is definitely against the revolutionary struggle which is indispensable for the overthrow of imperialist domination. Under this condition, the historic task of overthrowing imperialism devolves upon the masses. These need not hand over the power to the cowardly and counterrevolutionary bourgeoisie. They shall rather establish a revolutionary state of Democratic Dictatorship on the basis of all the oppressed and exploited classes, and carry through industrial development, creating conditions for the realization of Communism.

To begin with, private ownership will be abolished in land, mineral resources, means of transportation, key industries, and banks. The ownership will be vested in the state. The urgently needed industrial development will thus take place not as a source of profit for a particular class but to promote welfare of the toiling masses. Full advantage will be taken of the epoch-making technical achievements, made in other lands under capitalism, without prolonging the period of capitalist exploitation. Inheriting the collective conquest of mankind, and learning from the experience of others, toilers of India will consciously lay down the foundation of communism, in order later on actually to build up the entire structure of free, prosperous, and progressive community.

4. *The Structure of Indian Society*

Approximately 71 per cent of the people of India, that is, about 230 millions, live upon the proceeds of agriculture and allied industries. Out of these only about 12 millions come under the category of rent-receivers, that is, the princes, landlords, and their families. The total annual income of this class of landlords is estimated to be about 180 crores of rupees. This income is entirely unearned; for those receiving it do not perform any productive labour on land. Owing to excessive overcrowding on land, the remaining 218 millions are mostly toiling peasants; very few of them can be classed as exploiters of hired labour . . .

As it is, half the cultivated land in British India, and of it in the Native States, are owned by a handful of parasitic rent-receivers. The owner of the remainder is the foreign government. So, the peasants throughout the country are expropriated. They perform labour under conditions in which the main means of agricultural production, namely, land does not belong to them. The consequence of this social relation inevitably is proletarianization of the great bulk of the peasantry. The small fraction of the proceeds of their labour that remains with them after the payment of rent, taxes, and other numerous liabilities, obligations, levies, charges, etc. represents rather wages than the profit of independent individual producers.

In the case of the handicraft producers, some backward means of production [tools] may still belong to them; but this formal ownership is rendered of little practical value by the capitalist control of all the means of distribution and exchange. The only source of credit open to the handicraft as well as the agricultural producer is usury. Deep in indebtedness, they are not in a position to get anything like a fair price for their wares. Their labour-power and tools are practically mortgaged to the moneylender and the monopolist trader. The price of the agricultural produce is dictated by the usurious trade even before the production takes place. Together with the landlord, the moneylender and the trader dominate the entire rural economy, and constitute the triple pillar on which the system of colonial plunder is reared.

Besides, the handicraft producers are engaged in a losing battle. In the competition with articles made with machine, either imported or indigenous, their wares are driven to the wall. Such a large mass of people still cling to the disrupted mode of production because no new means for earning livelihood is opened to them. On the one hand, agriculture is much too overcrowded to accommodate more hands; and on the other, the urban labour market expands very slowly owing to the retarded growth of modern industry. In the normal process of economic development, capitalism expropriates the handicraft producer and transforms him into an industrial wage-earner. In India, he is driven to extreme pauperization with no prospect inside the capitalist order of society.

The movement for the revival of the cottage industry is doomed to fail as long as its product has to be sold in the competitive market. It is long since the Indian village has ceased to be a self-contained economic unit. Articles manufactured by machine find their way into the remotest village. Local handicraft wares cannot possibly hold their own in the competition, unless the cost of their production is so low as to imply rank waste of labour employed therein. This being the case, the labour power of the millions, tied obligatorily to the disrupted handicraft production in the absence of other employment, is wantonly wasted. So much labour power, that is potential value, wasted means progressive exhaustion of the social order that causes it. . . .

A very much greater amount [of labour power] is squandered in agriculture, owing to the forced overcrowding on land. This situation, breeding poverty and pauperization of the great majority of the people, is created by imperialist robbery which is capitalist exploitation without introducing higher means of production. The root cause of the malady eating into Indian social organism is its subjection to capitalist exploitation, while the largely pre-capitalist mode of production still remains intact. Production on the basis of wasted labour is pre-capitalist. Capitalism prospers when it can employ the largest amount of labour in the production of surplus value. The first condition for the normalization of the Indian economic life through the radical cure of the disease eating into its vitals is therefore the overthrow of imperialism.

The system of colonial plunder, however, is carried on with the help of native agencies. Imperialism has a social basis in India. Otherwise, foreign domination over such a vast population could not be maintained for such a long time. In normal conditions the Indian bourgeoisie should be primarily interested in clearing away the decayed and disrupted pre-capitalist mode of production. But in the given conditions of India they themselves are retaining it as accomplices of the colonial plunder. The landowning classes of India, being a creation of imperialism, support the colonial economic order unconditionally. Imperialist trade is carried on through Indian middlemen. Consequently these are interested in the perpetuation of the pre-capitalist mode of production constituting the basis of predatory colonial trade. On the other hand, the growth of modern industry is not possible, unless the social relations benefiting the Indian bourgeoisie together with the landlords are completely abolished. The present social relations galvanize the disrupted pre-capitalist mode of production. Enormous amount of labour is wasted, pauperizing the masses. The net result of this undermined state of national economy is progressive contraction of the purchasing power of the majority of the people. This is the real obstruction to any substantial development of modern industry. Expanding market is the basic condition for industrial development.

In addition to this basic condition, two other factors contribute to the industrial progress of a country. They are present in India. There is plenty of labour waiting to be employed in productive occupations and vast wealth is accumulated in the possession of the exploiting upper classes. No less than 30 per cent of the proceeds of the colonial plunder of the Indian masses went to the Indian trading class year by year during the last half a century. The Indian bourgeoisie realize their share of the booty through the import of gold. This has been steadily increasing ever since the beginning of the century. Lately, the increase has been in striking contrast to the decline in the import of merchandise. This process clearly indicates that the pauperization of the masses—the ruin of the entire national economy—takes place simultaneously with the growing opulence of a small parasitic minority. If the share of the landowning classes is taken into account, the process becomes all the more glaring.

In this situation, the accumulated wealth and supply of labour cannot be combined to build up modern industries in the country, because the other condition for industrial development cannot be created within the framework of the capitalist society.

Internal market can expand, creating conditions for the growth of modern industry, provided that the peasantry, constituting the great bulk of the Indian population, are left in possession of a greater part of their surplus produce. At present practically the entire surplus is taken away from them. So the condition for a normal economic development of the Indian society is not only the overthrow of imperialism, but there must also be a revolution in the ownership of land and the native bourgeoisie themselves must be deprived of the great bulk of their present income as participants in the plunderous colonial trade. In other words, free industrial development of India is not possible on the basis of the capitalist mode of production.

These deep-seated contradictions in the present structure of the Indian society—contradictions created by foreign intervention in the normal process of evolution—determine the relative importance of the various classes. The bourgeoisie become the leader of the society when capitalism is a progressive factor. When, however, as in India, it causes poverty, pauperization, degradation, and degeneration of the masses, the bourgeoisie can no longer be the leader of any forward movement. When they lead the whole society forward, they do so in the struggle for the advancement of the interests of their own class. But when their class interest becomes bound up with the preservation of existing conditions, they become a bulwark of reaction. The leadership of the movement for progress passes on to the new class having absolutely no relation with the past, and no stake in the established order; namely, the proletariat.

Therefore, in spite of its numerical smallness, the proletariat is the most important factor in the present Indian society. But its own numerical smallness is more than compensated by the vastness of the allied forces which are also proletarianized essentially, having no prospect inside the capitalist order of society. India will fast develop industrially only when production will no longer be for profit but for meeting the needs of her teeming millions. Only then the vast amount of labour so wantonly wasted today will be converted into valuable assets contributing to the rise of a prosperous people.

5. *Imperialism*

Although the basic laws of social evolution operate everywhere (subject to superficial variation of forms), the process is not even in all parts of the world. Some countries attained a higher level of development earlier than others. The uneven process of economic development of the world leads to the subjugation of some people by others. Modern imperialism is the subjugation of the economically backward peoples by advanced capitalist states.

The British conquest of India is indirectly connected with the historic struggle of the rising European bourgeoisie against feudal monarchist reaction. The discovery of the New World, the great influx of silver after the conquest of Mexico, and the expansion of eastern trade caused by the opening of the sea route to India, all these were important factors that greatly strengthened the position of the European bourgeoisie and enabled them to overthrow feudal absolutism.

In the beginning, European adventurers found their way to India in search of the fabulous riches of the Orient. The earlier stages of British relation with India bear the stamp of barbarian plunder of a prosperous land. Until then, India was economically not more backward than her invader. But presently the balance turned. The discovery of steam as a motive power ushered in the Industrial Revolution in England because the newly acquired knowledge could be put widely into practice, thanks to the plentiful supply of fuel from the vast deposits of coal. Mechanical means of production were invented in quick succession and before long England became the 'workshop of the World'.

Having acquired that position of advantage thanks to the endowment of nature, supplemented by the copious influx of silver from the New World and wealth robbed from India, Britain adopted the policy of keeping the colonies in industrial backwardness. In America she failed. Favoured by rich gifts of nature, the colonists in America forged ahead economically, defying the restrictions imposed by the mother country. But the internal conditions of this country helped Britain to carry on the policy successfully in the case of India.

In the eighteenth century, Indian society was overtaken by a severe crisis. The old feudal order had decayed, just as in contemporary Europe; but the germs of a new order had grown very insufficiently—still too weak to overthrow the tottering old order and themselves blossom forth into full splendour. The empire of the Great Mughals collapsed, throwing the whole country into a state of ruinous civil war which went on for decades. The economic life of the country was nearly choked. The decayed old order crashed in ruins, nearly burying the feeble germs of a new social order. Manufacturing industries had developed in India earlier than in Europe. They stagnated in the midst of the political chaos and economic confusion of [the] eighteenth century. Meanwhile, England not only caught up, but strode ahead, plentifully equipped with the rapidly developing mechanical means of production.

In the earlier decades of the nineteenth century the relation between the two countries had completely reversed. Decisively ahead industrially, England was exporting manufactured articles to India. Taking advantage of the exhaustion caused by the protracted civil wars, she had acquired political supremacy in India. The establishment of peace and order promoted trade; but the British rulers introduced measures to prevent peaceful conditions from quickening industrial development of India. The decisive factor, however, was not fiscal measures. It was England's possession of the mechanical means of production which successfully overwhelmed Indian handicraft. India remained in economic backwardness, while England reached the pinnacle of capitalist prosperity. The economically advanced country established its domination over the backward. . . .

The immense value of the colonies was realized fully in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. England's monopoly of the world market was contested by the rise of other industrial nations. These had completed the period in which their industrial development could take place mainly on the basis of home market. Finally they appeared on the world market as competitors of Britain. A new era of colonial expansion began; modern imperialism became the feature of world politics. The struggle for the partition of the economically backward regions of the earth into [a] monopoly market for the various industrial states finally led to the imperialist war of 1914. The quarter of a century preceding the war was the period of the greatest colonial expansion. Practically the entire world was divided up between a few imperialist powers. As a matter of fact, it was during this period that the phenomenal expansion of the British colonial empire took place.

A number of industrial countries were out not only to capture foreign markets for selling their 'surplus' manufactured commodities. What was more important was that they possessed surplus capital. The bourgeoisie in those countries had accumulated more capital than could be invested at home without bringing down the rate of profit. So, not only goods but capital also must be exported. Capital irresistibly seeks investment where the highest profit can be made, that is, where labour is cheap and the price of land low. Both these conditions obtain in the industrially backward countries. Consequently, these become the objects of modern imperialist exploitation through the export of capital.

Again England found herself in a position more advantageous than her rivals. Owing to a longer period of industrial prosperity built on the basis of the monopoly of the world market, she had a tremendous amount of surplus capital. Indeed, the accumulation of this surplus had brought about the industrial crisis in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Her monopoly of the world market being threatened by the rise of new industrial powers, and in order to overcome the crisis at home, England fell back upon her colonial reserves, and acquired new colonial possessions. Copious export of the surplus capital opened up new markets and tapped new sources of raw materials not only in the colonies, but also in many other industrially backward countries, thereby bringing these latter also in her sphere of political influence. Capital exported to the colonies and other backward countries not only expanded trade, but fetched greater dividend than it could at home. The expansion and prosperity of England as a modern imperial power is mainly due to the fact that ever since the closing years of the last century until the world war, her home requirements were met by only 30 per cent of the capital accumulated annually, thus leaving a tremendous exportable surplus. . . .

The war waged to further imperialist ambitions has accentuated the contradictions of colonial economy. It has seriously dislocated the entire system of colonial exploitation. Already before the war the pauperization of the Indian masses was so far advanced as presaged a severe crisis of colonial economy. The process was expedited by the extraordinary burden imposed upon the Indian masses for contributing to the expenses of the war. Consequently, as soon as the short post-war boom was over, the bankruptcy of the Indian customer became evident. India's 'obligations' to England are discharged year by year through the surplus of export over import. The surplus suddenly disappeared. Worse still, there was a heavy adverse balance. After two years of feverish efforts, the balance was re-established by artificially reducing imports. Thus, just at the moment when British industries need greater market, it contracted even in the monopoly sphere. The insistence upon collecting colonial booty was directly antagonistic to the interests of the home industries. The booty was collected just the same. The imperialist structure revealed itself in a top-heavy condition. Its collapse is inevitable.

Naturally, imperialism does not face the fatal situation with folded arms. It looks frantically for a possible way out. One is found in the plan of rationalizing colonial exploitation. The tendency in this direction was noticeable already in the beginning of the war. Far-seeing imperialists recognized the necessity of changing the old policy, and recommended that new methods of exploitation should be adopted to meet the new situation [Lord Hardinge's Memorial to the Home Government, 1915]. In 1916, the Industrial Commission was appointed 'to examine and report upon the possibilities of further industrial development'. After two years' investigation the Commission reported: 'It is vital for the government to secure the establishment in India of those industries whose absence exposes us to grave danger in the event of war.'[3]

The war had ruined a number of European countries economically. Their purchasing power had sunk nearly to the vanishing point. On the other hand, while English industries were mobilized for the production of war materials and British ships occupied in military transport, the USA and Japan had established themselves in the world market as exporters of manufactured goods. After the war, new rivals appeared on the scene. Through inflation of currency the cost of industrial production was greatly lowered in Germany and Belgium. Consequently Britain was faced with a severe trade depression. Owing to the contraction of the world market on the whole and the reduction of her share in it, Britain found herself in a deep industrial crisis. She must now fall back upon her colonial reserves. If the purchasing power of India, for example, increased, there would be market for the produce of British industries. But the old form of colonial exploitation did not permit any intrinsic expansion of the Indian market. It obstructed the development of forces of production. Therefore it could no longer be continued. The purchasing capacity of India could not increase unless she was allowed to produce more with which to pay more for her purchases. Under the pressure of all these facts, to promote the industrial development of India became the policy of imperialism. Traditional policy of imposing the doctrine of free trade upon the backward agricultural India was replaced by that of 'discriminating protection'.[4] This change of policy forced by changed conditions marked a definite turn in the history of imperialism.

The forms and methods of colonial exploitation in the period of capitalist decline cannot be identical with those in the previous epoch of capitalist expansion. But presently a new difficulty was encountered. Industrialization of India would create [a] market for the British metal and engineering industries. Development of the productive forces would raise the purchasing power of India. Direct exploitation of the Indian labour would mean production of larger surplus value. Granting the Indian bourgeoisie their share, imperialism would derive greater profit. Owing to the superfluity and extreme cheapness of labour, capital would accumulate in India at a higher rate. All these calculations were however upset by the inability of Britain to supply the capital to promote the industrialization for India at such a rapid tempo as would give relief to the home industries before it was too late. Industrial depression had seriously affected the accumulation of capital in Britain. It was calculated by competent authorities that by 1924 it was about 30 per cent lower than before the war. On the other hand, the home requirements for new capital had tremendously increased. Before the war something like 30 per cent of yearly accumulation satisfied the home requirements, leaving a huge exportable surplus. After the war the ratio was just reversed. Less than 30 per cent of the greatly reduced yearly accumulation could be exported. The remainder was necessary to re-equip the home industries so that they could compete with the highly developed mode of production in other countries. The crisis had become positively alarming. It severely shook the whole Imperial structure. Desperate measures were taken to meet the situation. For a time [an] embargo was placed upon the export of capital. England's inability to export capital frustrated the scheme of repairing her position by promoting industrial development of India. By 1923 the flow of capital from England to India completely stopped and did not begin again until 1929. . . .

Finding nearly insuperable difficulties in the way of industrializing India under the supremacy of Imperialist finance, attention was concentrated upon the possibilities of increasing agricultural production. A Royal Commission was set up to explore the field. But it was not given the power to suggest any change in the semi-feudal, pre-capitalist relationship of property in land which is the basic obstacle to any substantial increase of agricultural production. . . .[5] The recommendations of the Agricultural Commission have remained on paper. Replacement of the commonly used primitive wooden plough by the modern steel instrument and the introduction of other improved agricultural implements would, on the one hand, open up extensive market for the British iron and steel industry and, on the other hand, increase the total volume of agricultural produce. This, in its turn, would raise the purchasing power of India, thereby contributing to the British trade. But this cannot happen unless the peasants are in a position to buy modern implements. Any substantial increase of agricultural production is therefore conditional upon the peasantry being relieved considerably of the burden that today grinds them down to the state of progressive pauperization. This condition can be created by, on the one hand, encroaching upon the imperialist booty, and on the other hand, by depriving the parasitic landlords of their unearned income. In addition, there are the moneylenders and monopolist traders who also must be stamped out. In short, the entire system of colonial exploitation must go before any improvement can take place in the agricultural productivity of India. As imperialism cannot commit suicide with the hope of resurrecting into a new life it is not able to extricate itself from the crisis of its own creation.

While imperialism was struggling in vain with the agricultural crisis, this was aggravated by external causes. The general decay of capitalism has brought in its train a severe agrarian crisis throughout the world.

Contraction of the world market brought down the price of agricultural products. As an agricultural country, Indian has been hit hard by this. Suddenly the meagre purchasing power of the bulk of her population has declined by half, further injuring British trade.

Imports into India are paid by the export of agricultural products. The heavy fall in the price of these has caused a corresponding drop of her capacity to purchase foreign commodities. The value of the total foreign trade of India decreased in 1930 to 442 crores of rupees as against 578 in the previous year. Four years ago the figure was 633. The export registered a decrease of 70 crores and the import of 84 crores. On the other hand, the fall of the price of agricultural staples like cotton, jute, wheat, oil-seeds, etc. below even the cost of production renders the peasant utterly unable to discharge their 'obligation' [rent, taxes, interest, etc.]. In consequence of this economic depression and disorganization, there is a heavy deficit in the government budget. In view of the extreme poverty of the masses, any new taxation will make the situation worse. Still, in a desperate plight the government has decided to impose heavy indirect taxes [duty on imports]. The effect of this measure will be further rise in the price of imported commodities. The discrepancy between the prices of agricultural and manufactured commodities will grow still wider. The purchasing power of the peasant masses will further decline. The revolutionary crisis will ripen.

The crisis involves not only imperialism but also Indian capitalism, an integral part of the decayed colonial system. Forced by its own internal contradictions, imperialism is conferring on India the doubtful boon of protectionism, so lustily coveted by the Indian bourgeoisie. The rise of prices that inevitably follows high tariff will cause heavy contraction of the Indian market. The masses are so poor that if the prices of the commodities rise just a little they are obliged to go without even the most rudimentary necessities of life.

Thus the crisis created by imperialist exploitation defies all efforts to overcome it. It is rapidly maturing into a revolutionary situation in which the overthrow of imperialism and destruction of its native allies becomes a condition even for the normal capitalist development of the country. In the state of hopeless economic bankruptcy, poor intellectuals together with workers, peasants, artisans, small traders, etc., constituting nearly 90 per cent of the population, must choose between decay, degradation, and death from starvation, on the one hand, or revolt against the established order, on the other. They have chosen the latter course.

In this situation of a maturing revolutionary crisis, imperialism seeks a compromise with the Indian bourgeoisie to stabilize its shaken position. On the other hand, the Indian nationalist bourgeoisie themselves are equally alarmed by the rising tide of revolution. Being an integral part of the colonial system they will also be swept away by the gathering storm. But the compromise eagerly desired by both will still aggravate the crisis hastening their overthrow. In this period of its decay and decline, imperialism cannot forego the smallest part of the colonial reserves. Its desire is to intensify the exploitation of the colonial masses as a means of propping up its tottering structure. But in order to enlist the support and services of the nationalist bourgeoisie, it is compelled to grant some political rights and economic concessions. An elaborate system of safeguards provided in the new constitution will not, however, permit the Indian bourgeoisie to aggrandize themselves by encroaching upon the reserves of imperialism. The federal constitution will place the legislature at the mercy of the feudal princes, and they and other reactionary elements will obviate any attack upon the unearned income of the landed aristocracy. So economic concessions to the Indian bourgeoisie will mean greater exploitation of the masses.

A substantial expansion in the productivity of labour being (as explained above) impossible under given conditions, any increase in the gain of the native bourgeoisie can take place only by robbing the toiling masses still more of their very meagre surplus produce, that is, by further pauperizing them. Fiscal autonomy granted to the Indian bourgeoisie will tell adversely upon the declining trade long before its problematical stimulus for industrial development is felt.

Thus, the revolutionary crisis created by the contradictions of imperialism cannot be overcome. The system of colonial exploitation cannot be stabilized even with the willing help of the native bourgeoisie. It must be overthrown. Decayed imperialism is no more able to crush the inevitable revolution than it could remove the cause leading up to it. In order to suppress the mighty revolt of the Indian masses, imperialism must undertake a prolonged military operation. In its present state of bankruptcy it will be unable to finance such a colonial war. Besides protracted belligerent operations to crush the revolution in India will give a staggering blow to British trade already dwindled to alarming proportions. The chronic industrial depression in British trade will develop into a revolutionary crisis. In short, a revolutionary outbreak in India will very likely cause the overthrow of capitalism in Britain, thereby blowing up the decayed foundation of imperialism.

6. The Struggle for National Freedom

Until after the world war, there had been no serious challenge to the imperialist domination of India. Ever since the foundation of the National Congress, the bourgeoisie had feebly voiced their discontent with the conditions of political subjugation and economic backwardness. But they never advocated a revolutionary overthrow of foreign government. They did not come forward as the standard-bearer of national freedom; they agitated for constitutional reforms. The petty bourgeois secret societies advocated overthrow of the foreign government. But owing to their decidedly reactionary social outlook, clouded with religious ideology, they were utterly unable to tackle the problem.

The situation changed in consequence of the mass awakening brought about by intensified exploitation during the war. In 1919, agrarian discontent became evident throughout the country. On the other hand, industrial centres became the scene of strikes, until then a rare phenomenon in India. Alarmed by these first signs of a mass upheaval, and under the pressure of its internal contradictions, accentuated by the war, imperialism granted the Indian bourgeoisie some constitutional reforms and economic concessions.

Only four years ago, 1916, when the British Government was in the most precarious condition, the nationalist bourgeoisie had stood by it loyally, content with a mere promise that their meritorious services would be rewarded in the fullness of time. Meanwhile a new factor had intervened in the situation. Encouraged by the mass awakening, the Indian National Congress in 1920 decided to boycott the reforms and launched the campaign of Non-cooperation with the British Government. Indeed, the upper strata of the bourgeoisie, until then the dominating factor in the nationalist movement, accepted the reforms granted. They joined hands with imperialism in suppressing the first outburst of mass revolt. The opposition appeared to come from the petty bourgeoisie who captured the leadership of the Congress, with the programme of 'Non-violent Non-cooperation'. But it soon became evident that the Congress did not want to lead a revolutionary mass movement for national freedom. It revealed itself to be the political organ of the bourgeoisie exploiting the new factor of mass awakening to secure more concessions from imperialism.

Objectively, the non-cooperation movement was revolutionary. Its background was the awakening of the masses. It reflected the revolt of the oppressed and exploited masses against colonial slavery which had become intolerable. Had the nationalist bourgeoisie wanted to overthrow imperialist domination, they would have placed themselves at the head of the mass upheaval. But they hankered only for an equal partnership inside the British Empire, 'and were prepared to reach that modest goal by gradual stages'. Having a stake in the system of colonial exploitation, they could not lead a revolt against the system. On the other hand, the mass movement was as yet too immature to throw up its own leadership. The youthful proletariat was still unprepared to assume the leadership of the struggle for national freedom. Consequently, a revolutionary movement was saddled with a reactionary ideology and a reformist programme. The cardinal principle of Gandhism is the cult of non-violence. The object of the cult is to prevent the oppressed masses from rebelling against and overthrowing the established order. The Congress incited the masses to brandish their mighty fist in order to terrify imperialism but would not allow the blow to fall. The political demand of the non-cooperating Congress was greater than reform granted by the Government of India Act of 1919. Its economic demands all reflected the interests of the bourgeoisie, although these stood outside the Congress and even fought the Non-cooperation movement.

The scheme of civil-disobedience reflected the rebelliousness of the masses. But the petty bourgeois leaders of the Congress never meant to put it into practice. The no-tax campaign was called off, as soon as it served as the signal for a countrywide peasant uprising. The Congress openly rushed to the aid of the landlords and denounced the revolutionary action of the peasantry [Bardoli Resolution of 1922].[6] Finally it was declared that the country was not prepared yet for civil disobedience, since the atmosphere of non-violence had not yet been created. The cult of non-violence served the purpose of sabotaging the revolutionary movement for national freedom.

But the mass revolt had been brought about by objective conditions which remained in operation. The proletariat began to act independently of the Congress appearing on the scene as the would-be leader of the revolutionary struggle for the national freedom. After a few years of depression, following the collapse of the non-cooperation movement, the country was swept by a mighty wave of strikes and lock-outs. Agrarian discontent also grew. Sharpening of the class struggle gave a new impetus to the struggle for national freedom. The radical elements of the petty bourgeoisie were encouraged. In the atmosphere of the second wave of mass upheaval, sure to be mightier than the first, the Congress was forced to endorse the demand for complete national independence. But it still remained under the bourgeois influence, acting only reluctantly under pressure, always anxious to avoid any revolutionary action.

The campaign of civil disobedience, staged by the Congress ostensibly to enforce its demand for Complete Independence, was the last effort to retain the mass struggle for national freedom under the treacherous leadership of the bourgeoisie.

The proletariat has appeared on the scene with the objective task of providing the struggle for national freedom with a revolutionary leadership. Its vanguard, the Communists, had placed before the country a programme of National Democratic revolution. They were agitating to rally the rebellious peasantry and the discontented petty bourgeoisie in the revolutionary struggle for national freedom under the hegemony of the proletariat. Should the Congress fail to make a radical gesture, the nationalist movement would outgrow the reactionary influence of the bourgeoisie. But whatever might have been the object of the Congress leaders, their action served as the signal to open the floodgates of mass energy. The movement headed towards a revolutionary uprising, defying all the reactionary dogmas of Gandhism. In order not to lose the confidence of the masses, hoping still to keep them away from the path of revolutionary struggle, the Mahatma himself said and did things which only fanned the fire of revolt.

Imperialism was mortally alarmed. To cope with the situation it badly needed the services of the nationalist bourgeoisie. These also did not at all like the turn the movement was taking. It had served their purpose. It had strengthened their hands at the first London Conference. As soon as the basis for a compromise with imperialism was laid, the bourgeoisie advised their agents guiding the Congress to call a halt. These instantly obeyed and proclaimed their readiness for peace. But the movement can no longer be preremptorily called off as ten years ago. The revolutionary crisis has matured in the meantime. Severe agrarian depression has placed before the peasant masses the alternatives of revolt or starvation. As millions and millions cannot be expected to resign themselves to their fate and die of starvation, the peasantry have chosen the first alternative. The entire country is in the throes of a mighty peasant revolt. On the other hand, decay of capitalism has sharpened the class struggle in the cities. The proletariat has gone a long way in liberating itself from the reactionary influence of the nationalist bourgeoisie exercised through the personality of Gandhi. In the atmosphere of widespread mass revolt the petty bourgeoisie are showing radical tendencies. In short, all the forces of national democratic revolution are marshalled. The movement for national freedom has developed into a gigantic class struggle. In this situation the task is to confront the counter-revolutionary alliance of foreign imperialism and native reaction (the nationalist bourgeoisie is a throughly reactionary force) with the united army of all the oppressed and exploited classes.

7. *The National Revolution*

National freedom is not a thing by itself. It is the means to an end. India is in the throes of a revolution in the process of rebirth. National independence is the first stage of this revolution. The people of India must be free from foreign domination in order to rebuild their country to catch up with the tremendous progress made by other nations, while they remained in political bondage and consequent economic backwardness and cultural stagnation. . . .

The political task of national revolution is to overthrow imperialist rule and to establish a democratic state. But owing to the class basis of the Indian national democratic revolution, the state created by it will not be formal parliamentary democracy. The motive force of the Indian National Democratic Revolution is the struggle between the exploiting and the exploited classes. Therefore it will not establish parliamentary democracy which is the organ of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

Being essentially a struggle between the exploiting and the exploited classes, the Indian national democratic revolution will be victorious under the leadership of the proletariat, as the immediate prelude to socialist Revolution. But the leadership of the proletariat will be established in the course of the struggle through successive stages of the revolution. The decisive factor in the national democratic revolution is the peasantry. Although the Indian peasant masses are essentially proletarianized, they will not immediately accept the programme of the proletarian revolution. The peasantry want to possess the land they cultivate. The proletariat will capture the leadership of the peasantry by supporting their demand for the ownership of land. The petty bourgeoisie (other than the peasantry) are also a factor in national democratic revolution. They are connected with certain decaying forms of private property; therefore, they will not directly accept the leadership of the proletariat. These oppressed and exploited classes can be and should be mobilized in a revolutionary struggle for democratic freedom under the hegemony of the proletariat. *Taking place under proletarian hegemony, the national revolutionary struggle will establish the Democratic dictatorship of the oppressed and exploited classes.* By virtue of the fact that the national democratic revolution will develop and finally succeed as a struggle against capitalism, the proletariat is the driving force behind it. All other classes, oppressed and exploited by capitalism fully and partially, directly or indirectly, come under the influence of the proletariat. By exposing the counter-revolutionary character of the nationalist bourgeoisie; by emphasizing upon the necessity of a revolutionary struggle for the complete overthrow of imperialist domination; by denouncing the programme of 'equal partnership within the British Empire' as harmful to the interests of the masses; by advocating revolutionary democratic freedom for all the oppressed and exploited classes; by putting forward demands for safeguarding and furthering the interests of the peasantry and the poor petty bourgeois masses, and by placing itself at the forefront of the entire national revolutionary struggle, the proletariat will become the leader of the national revolution.

8. *The Agrarian Question*[7]

. . .The solution of the agrarian problem is the essential condition for India becoming an industrial country. There can be no national prosperity so long as the great majority of the people remain in the state of economic bankruptcy. The entire social structure of the country must undergo a revolution. Antiquated means and modes of production should be discarded in favour of modern ones. This depends upon the disruption of the feudal, semi-feudal, and akin forms of landownership which deprive the peasantry practically of their entire surplus produce. A specific mode of production cannot be discarded without disrupting the form of property with which it is related. The peasant will be able to improve the means and modes of agricultural production only when the larger part of his surplus produce remains in his possession.

The following measures are necessary for the solution of the agrarian question: 1. *Overthrow of imperialism* 2. *Destruction of the native states and abolition of landlordism* 3. *Nationalization of land by the revolutionary state of Democratic Dictatorship* 4. *Abolition of all charges on the peasantry except a unitary land tax payable to the state not exceeding 15 per cent of the net produce* 5. *Abolition of indirect taxes* 6. *Complete exemption from taxation for peasants living on 'uneconomic holdings'* 7. *Liquidation of the peasants' indebtedness* 8. *Control of usury interest not to exceed 6 per cent, per annum.*

The introduction of these measures will pour new blood in the withered veins of our country. The Native states and landlordism should be destroyed as representing a form of property which has become detrimental to the economic progress of the nation. The total net income of the princes and feudal landlords is estimated to be 180 crores of rupees a year. The wealth appropriated by this parasitic minority is not converted into productive capital. This wealth, representing a considerable part of the total national income, should be detached from its present parasitic possessors, and transferred to quarters where it will be a mighty stimulus for the economic life of the entire nation. Left in possession of a larger share of the produce of their labour, the peasantry will be able to purchase more necessities of life. That will mean a tremendous incentive to the trade and industry of the country. They will also be able to improve the mode of cultivating land by acquiring modern agricultural implements. That will again raise the productivity of the land, thereby continuously quickening the economic life of the nation. . . .

The galvanization of the decayed feudal relations, the backwardness of the agricultural industry, and the pauperization of the peasantry are the result of the capitalist (imperialism is the highest form of capitalism) exploitation on the basis of essentially pre-capitalist modes of production. Therefore in India the agrarian problem cannot be solved within the limits of capitalist society.

As was done by the bourgeois revolution in Europe, the serfs could be 'freed' by the bourgeoisie in order to be wage slaves of capitalism. But the Indian peasants are serfs of capitalism, so they cannot be freed by the bourgeoisie. The liberation of the Indian peasantry is conditional upon the destruction of capitalism, so they cannot be freed by the bourgeoisie as in Europe. And liberation of the peasantry from feudal bondages being its essential task, the Democratic National Revolution in India cannot succeed as a bourgeois revolution. In its destructive role, it is a bourgeois revolution. In its constructive role it, nevertheless, assumes a more radical social character. To begin with, it must destroy social institutions, property relations, and modes of production that stand in the way to the development of capitalism, but it will not finish with creating conditions for capitalist prosperity. It will prepare the ground for non-capitalist economic development as the basis for the Socialist society. This dual character and perspective of the national democratic revolution results from the nature of the agrarian problem. The national democratic revolution cannot be successful without solving this problem, and this basic problem of the national democratic revolution cannot be solved without destroying capitalism. As an immediate prelude to a deeper social transformation, the national democratic revolution comes under the leadership of the proletariat acting as a driving force of a broad revolutionary alliance of all the oppressed and exploited classes.

9. The Proletariat and the National Revolution

Under the given Indian conditions, the proletariat is the only class that can solve the problems of the national revolution. The basic problem of all the problems, the agrarian question, cannot be tackled by the bourgeoisie. They are against an agrarian revolution. The petty bourgeoisie, particularly the poor intellectuals, are an important factor in the national revolution. Still, they are unable to liberate themselves from reactionary social outlook. Religion, spiritualism, and Gandhism have a strong hold upon them. . . . The peasantry themselves are too backward to be an independent political factor. In the absence of proletarian leadership, the peasantry can be decoyed in the blind alley of reformism, thereby becoming a factor of capitalist stabilization.

Thus the relation of class forces places the proletariat in the forefront of the entire national revolutionary army demanding complete overthrow of imperialism, establishment of a revolutionary democratic state, relentless struggle against the counter-revolutionary politics of the nationalist bourgeoisie, revolutionary mobilization of the petty bourgeois masses, and thorough accomplishment of the agrarian revolution. . . .

The proletariat participate in the national democratic revolution as its driving force not with the maximum programme of their class. The immediate demands of the proletariat are:

1. *Nationalization of the railways, key industries and banks* 2. *Control of these nationalized industries by the workers employed therein* 3. *Minimum wages guaranteeing standard of living of the workers* 4. *Limitation of the working time to 7 hours a day* 5. *Comfortable housing at rent not exceeding 10 per cent*

of the wages 6. *Insurance against unemployment, sickness, old age and maternity* 7. *Elimination of child labour through the introduction of free and compulsory education for children up to 16 years of age* 8. *Freedom of speech, press and association* 9. *Right to strike* 10. *Arming the workers.*

In addition to the programme of the agrarian revolution, the revolutionary democratic state must introduce these measures. The fulfilment of these minimum demands of the proletariat will not in any way harm their allies in the national democratic revolution. Private property as an institution will not be abolished. Artisans and small manufacturers will not be expropriated. Private trade will not be prohibited. The peasants will be the absolute owners of the product of the land cultivated by them. These measures, together with the outcome of the agrarian revolution, will democratize the entire economic life of the country. Conditions for rapid industrial development will be created. But the benefit of that development will not be monopolized by a small class of capitalists. Taking place under the ownership of the revolutionary state of Democratic Dictatorship, according to a carefully worked out plan (in contrast to the chaotic capitalist production for exchange) and under the control of the workers themselves, industrial development will not mean expropriation and proletarianization of the peasantry and exploitation of the working class. It will cause all round progress and prosperity, and lay down the foundation for the complete Socialist reconstruction of the society.

10. Capture of Power

The programme of National Revolution can be realized only after the transfer of all political power to the Indian masses. Political power, however, is never transferred automatically. It is never voluntarily surrendered by those possessing it. The British rulers of India will never part with a particle of political power which enables them to dominate the economic life of the country. They maintain their position of power and privilege by force. Therefore it is only by the application of force that they can be dislodged from their position. The capture of political power by the people is possible only after the overthrow of the present imperialist state through an armed insurrection.

Committed to constitutionalism or pacifism, the nationalist bourgeoisie have exchewed the path of an armed insurrection. The proletariat is the only class that firmly stands on that path. The historic struggle for the capture of power by the popular masses therefore can take place only under the hegemony of the proletariat. . . . The relation of forces in this historic struggle is that on the one side, [there is] British imperialism supported by the Indian feudal princes, landlords, and capitalists, and on the other side is the vast army of the exploited and oppressed masses.

The central pivot of one is British imperialism; that of the other is the revolutionary proletariat. The leader of the force of counter-revolution is the imperialist state with its formidable forces of coercion, namely army, navy police, and repressive laws. At the van of the revolutionary masses, on the other hand, stands the Communist party which fortified with solidarity of the exploited classes and backed up by the great army of the international proletariat, courageously mobilizes and marshalls the masses for the armed insurrection against the decayed established order. . . .

The struggle for power, out of which alone the Free Indian state can rise will thus be a gigantic class struggle—that of the oppressed against the oppressors, of the exploited against the exploiters, of the dispossessed against the possessors. In the midst of this struggle stands the proletariat, the most exploited and completely dispossessed class. The revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat, the Communist party, shall organize the insurrection in the following way.

11. On the Road to Insurrection

Before the struggle for power can actually begin, popular organs for this struggle must be created to be able to overwhelm the formidable enemy. The insurrection must have the broadest possible mass basis. All the anti-imperialist forces must be involved in it directly or indirectly. Elements that may not actively participate in the insurrection must be neutralized. Finally, what is most important, is the enlistment of the sympathy and support of the troops, not only Indian but also British.

The backward masses of the Indian people, brutally oppressed and mercilessly exploited by foreign imperialism and its native allies, are not yet politically conscious. Their ignorance is exploited not only by the bourgeois nationalist politicians but even by the foreign government operating through Indian officials. They are not able to grasp big political issues. National freedom remains an abstract conception for them. Under the burden of intolerable exploitation, they are being moved by an elementary spirit of revolt. To develop this revolt, it is necessary to set an immediate object before it; an object that can be easily visualized by the masses. They must be given a programme of action. They must be led in the struggle for partial demands. Out of the struggle shall grow mass organizations of the various oppressed and exploited classes fighting for their respective immediate demands, such as:

1. *Higher wages* 2. *Eight hours working day* 3. *Better conditions for labour* 4. *Unemployment, sickness, old age and maternity insurance at the expense of the employers* 5. *Reduction of land rent by 50 per cent* 6. *Annulment of indebtedness of the poor peasants, workers, and artisans* 7. *Complete exemption from rent of 'uneconomic holdings'* 8. *Interests on money*

borrowed by the peasants, workers, artisans, and small traders not to exceed 6 per cent per annum 9. *Rent of dwelling quarters in town not to exceed 10 per cent of the wages or salary of the occupant* 10. *Abolition of indirect taxation (protective tariffs, salt tax, excise duty, irrigation cess, etc.)* 11. *Free compulsory primary education, and* 12. *Freedom of press, speech and association.*

Mobilized in the struggle with this programme of action, the oppressed and exploited classes will learn by experience that even the most minimum demands cannot be satisfied under the given conditions of the country. The mass struggle with immediate economic demands will automatically develop into a revolutionary political attack upon the established order. The imperialist state will thus be exposed before the masses as the bulwark of all the forces of reaction, oppression, and exploitation. The ground will be prepared for the struggle for the capture of power.

The overthrow of the established state is conditional upon the rise of a new organ of power. The forces antagonistic to the established order therefore must create this new organ preparatory to the insurrection. The creation of the basis of the rising revolutionary state is the effective challenge to the established authority. Armed insurrection for the final overthrow of the established state is the inevitable consequence of this challenge. The basic feature of the final stage of the struggle for the capture of power is the existence of two organs, each claiming sovereign authority. The revolutionary classes create their organ of power challenging the authority of the established state, while this still tries to resist the attack, and even assumes counter-revolutionary offensive. The organ of revolutionary power takes over the function of the state after the established authority has been overwhelmed by the mass insurrection, its counter-revolutionary offensive checked and resistance broken.

To lead the revolutionary masses in the struggle for the creation of their organ for capturing power is the task of their vanguard, the party of the proletariat, the Communist Party. The oppressed and exploited classes having been set in a movement for enforcing their respective minimum demands, a step further will be taken with the object of coordinating their activities locally. Local committees of deputies elected by the workers and peasants, artisans and employees, poor intellectuals and small traders, will be set up throughout the country. Growing out of the struggle of the masses, these committees will be the custodians of the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people, oppressed and exploited by foreign imperialism and its native allies. In order to resist repression they will rally round them [the] most active and energetic elements of their constituents as the storm troop of the developing revolution. Under the leadership of these committees the masses will take direct action (strike, non-payment of rent, etc.) to enforce their partial demands. This will bring them up against the coercive instruments of imperialist state defending the vested interests, foreign as well as native. The struggle with partial economic demands will assume [a] clear political character. It will become a gigantic political struggle; the revolutionary struggle; for the conquest of political power. The conditions for the final onslaught against the established authority will by then have been created.

The success of insurrection will greatly depend upon the attitude of the military forces of the Government. Propaganda and agitation to enlist the support of the soldiers, not only Indian but British as well, must be carried on simultaneously with the process of mass mobilization. The redress of the grievances of the soldiers and policemen should be included in the programme of action of the popular movement. The far-reaching implication of agrarian revolution should be explained to the Indian soldiers: how they themselves are victims of decayed capitalism which can no longer provide them the opportunity to earn their daily bread by productive labour. They shall be offered full right of citizenship in free India if they will stay in this country not as sentinels of colonialism, but as useful members of the new social order. Above all, they shall be reminded that they are also workers who, thrown into the desperate state of permanent unemployment by the decay of capitalism, have been forced to go abroad as hired gunmen of predatory imperialism. . . . Finally, the soldiers will be called upon to send their delegates to the committees of the representatives of the oppressed and exploited classes.

Thus these committees will become fully representative democratic bodies focusing the organized will of the masses and therefore solid units of the revolutionary state. A mighty revolutionary alliance of the oppressed and exploited classes (workers, peasants, artisans, employees, poor intellectuals, and small traders) constituting over 90 per cent of the people, will rise challenging the power and privileges of the counter-revolutionary block of foreign imperialism and native capitalism, feudalism, and landlordism.

The signal for insurrection will be the slogan for the election of the NATIONAL CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY by the committees of the oppressed classes. The established authorities not being likely to permit the election of the CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, the revolutionary committees will resort to taking over the function of the local government. This will not be a peaceful procedure. The local forces of the imperialist state must be overwhelmed and local organs of power (police stations, law courts, etc.) destroyed. The first act of the revolutionary committees will be to issue decrees enforcing the demands of the oppressed and exploited classes. The apparatus of the imperialist state thus broken down under a concerted mass attack, it will not be able to resist the revolution. It will be overwhelmed by the insurrection of the revolutionary democratic masses, whose representatives will victoriously meet in the CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY to set up the new state of DEMOCRATIC DICTATORSHIP.

The first act of the Constituent Assembly will be to issue decrees recognizing the local revolutionary committees as the basic units of the new state and sanctioning their action in enforcing the demands of the masses. Violent measures necessary for the enforcement of the programme of National Revolution will be declared legal, and the local revolutionary committees will be empowered to carry out the enforcement. Then the fundamental law of the revolutionary state will be enacted on the basis of the following principles:

1. Transfer of all power to the oppressed and exploited classes 2. Disenfranchisement and suppression of the landlords and big capitalists (who have opposed revolutionary struggle for complete national freedom by advocating self-government within the B·itish Empire) 3. Destruction of Native States through the revolutionary action of the subjects of these remnants of feudal reaction 4. Abolition of landlordism—confiscation of the land by the peasants operating through the local revolutionary committees 5. Nationalization of land, public utilities, mineral resources, large-scale industries, and banks 6. Reduction of land tax and other charges on the peasantry to such a level as will leave them in possession of the large part of their surplus produce 7. Right of the peasants and small producers to dispose freely of the fruits of their labour (in case of the peasants this right will mean virtual ownership of the land by the cultivator, although to prevent new accumulation, land sale and transfer will be restricted) 8. Guarantee for progressive rise in the standard of living of the workers through the introduction of minimum wages (real wages to rise progressively), shorter hours of work (8 hours to begin with), healthy condition of work and living, insurance against unemployment, sickness, old age, and maternity 9. Workers control of nationalized industries.

12. Democratic Dictatorship

The differentiation of the classes taking place in course of development of the struggle for national freedom precludes that the National Revolution will establish a parliamentary democratic state. By the logic of the class antagonism, political power will be wrested from foreign imperialism not by the entire Indian people but only by the exploited and oppressed masses. Indeed, the maturing of the national democratic revolution drives the upper strata of the Indian people definitely into the camp of imperialism. National independence will be conquered by defeating and destroying these allies of foreign imperialism together with this latter. The composition of CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY is determined by the class basis of the national revolution, and the constitution of the revolutionary state will be determined by the social composition of the CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. Not being elected by universal suffrage (it cannot be, owing to the relation of [the] forces in the national revolution) the Constituent Assembly is not a bourgeois parliament. Therefore it will not establish a parliamentary democratic state. But the state constituted by it will be most democratic, being based upon the franchise of the overwhelming majority of the people. At the same time, the free national state will be a dictatorship, for it will suppress a section of the population. The landlords and capitalists cannot have any power in the state that will be established in the teeth of their opposition by frustrating their counter-revolutionary scheme of making a block with foreign imperialism with the object of becoming a junior partner in the profitable business of plundering the Indian masses. The revolutionary democratic state will be a dictatorship because it will mercilessly suppress its vanquished enemy, disregarding the hypocritical parliamentary principle of the right of the minority. A counter-revolutionary minority cannot have any power in the revolutionary state.

The Indian National Revolution is a new type of revolution. Therefore it is bound to establish a new type of state. Historically, by virtue of the social forces involved and in view of its task, the Indian National Revolution is a bourgeois democratic revolution. Nevertheless, owing to changed world conditions, general decline of capitalism and relation of classes, it assumes many features of the proletarian Socialist Revolution. For historical reasons, two different types of revolutions ordinarily belonging to two different periods of history are taking place in India at the same time. The accomplishment of the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution will be a part of the process of Socialist reconstruction. The state, which will create the legal conditions for this dual process of social transformation, therefore, cannot be the type set up by the proletarian revolution. To perform its dual function, it must necessarily be neither, while containing partially the character and properties of both the types. It will be a democratic state under the hegemony of the proletariat. The democratic state becomes the instrument of capitalist developments and Dictatorship, when it is established and dominated by the bourgeoisie. But a Dictatorship established by the oppressed and exploited classes upon the overthrow not only of foreign imperialism but of native feudalism and capitalism, comes under the hegemony of the proletariat—a hegemony of the most revolutionary class in the struggle for the conquest of power—and consequently it assumes a different role. It nevertheless remains democratic since its social basis is a broad alliance of classes which includes a large bourgeois element. At the same time, proletarian hegemony transforms it into an instrument of Socialist reconstruction. Socially bourgeois oppressed and exploited classes would not directly and consciously accept the Socialist programme. Their salvation, however, lies only in Socialism. Under the hegemony of the most revolutionary class, they will automatically advance towards their salvation. The revolutionary state of Democratic Dictatorship will be the instrument for the proletariat to transform the bourgeois democratic revolution into the Socialist Revolution.

The structure of the state shall be determined by its character and the role it has to perform. Not being typically bourgeois democratic, it will discard parliamentarism. The essence of parliamentary democracy is the formal and fictitious nature of the political right of the average citizen. Under that system, political right does not carry real and effective political power. The average citizen is given the right of casting [his] vote once in a while, but the real power is monopolized by the capitalist ruling class. The state is so constructed as to render the political right of the average citizen formal and fictitious. Political right carries real and effective political power when the legislative and executive functions of the state are not separated as under parliamentary democracy.

DEMOCRATIC DICTATORSHIP will abolish the separation of the two functions of the state Each citizen will have not only the right to influence legislation, but also the power to participate actively in the enforcement of the law. The state apparatus will be so constructed as to render the effective exercise of the power possible. The basic unit of the state will not be the individual citizen casting a vote from time to time, but citizens organized by productive vocations. The delegates from these citizens' organizations will constitute the basic unit of the state apparatus.

Conference of delegates from these basic units will be held from time to time on district, divisional, provincial, and all-India scale. Both legislative and executive authorities will be vested in these conferences which will elect Standing committees to carry on the administration in the period intervening between two conferences. Thus the legislative control of the executive will cease to be an empty formality. Laws will be given and executed by the selfsame organ. The state apparatus will not be an instrument of coercion standing over the head of the people, beyond all control for practical purposes. It will be organically connected with the entire citizenship, every member of which will participate in the administration, political as well as economic.

Such a constitution, on the one hand, will effectively disfranchise the expropriated landlords and capitalists, thereby guaranteeing the state its character of dictatorship, and on the other hand, make the state really democratic, giving every citizen not only formal political right but power to exercise it. Being thus the organ of power of the toiling masses, acting under the hegemony of the revolutionary proletariat, the state of democratic dictatorship will become an instrument of Socialist reconstruction of the Indian society.

Section III

The Period of Transition

The overthrow of imperialism by itself will not represent the completion of the bourgeois revolution. National independence will only make it possible for the Indian people to realize the historic tasks so long overdue. The revolutionary state of democratic dictatorship of the oppressed will be the instrument for the purpose. By abolishing antiquated forms of property (that is social relations determining the process of production) it will create conditions for the free development of the means of production. . . . In consequence of the overlapping of the two revolutions (bourgeois and proletarian), a specific type of development determined by historical course, there will be a period of transition not from capitalism to Socialism (which is a stage of development of the revolution in the countries of normal social revolution), but a period in which the development of the means and forms of production hitherto associated with capitalism will take place as an integral part of the process of the construction of the Socialist society. . . .

The motive force of the phenomenal development taking place historically under capitalism is not the appropriation of the surplus value by a class entirely divorced from the process of production, which is the essential feature of the capitalist mode of production. The motive force that entirely revolutionizes the means and methods of production is the tremendous amount of surplus value itself. The generation of this motive force of social revolution in an ever-increasing amount coincides, in its turn, with the rapid development of the means of production (mechanical and technological) that it quickens. In other words, the phenomenal development of the means and methods of production taking place under capitalism is not inseparable from the essential role of capitalism, namely, the appropriation by a class, entirely divorced from the process of production, of surplus value created by labour performed socially. To state the conclusion still in another way: the phenomenal development of the means of production, which entirely revolutionizes the process of production, does not necessarily imply exploitation of labour as under capitalism.

The bourgeois revolution (in its destructive aspect) changes the economic foundation of society, thus freeing the new forces of production, already generated in the womb of the old order, but fettered by its property relations. With the change of the economic foundation, the superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. The transformation of the material conditions of production takes place with the precision of natural science (Marx). By virtue of possession of political power the bourgeoisie acquire control over the entire process of development and harness it for the aggrandizement of their class. Having been freed from feudal bondage, the new forces of production unfold themselves less and less with the assistance and more and more in spite of the bourgeoisie. Their unlimited objective revolutionary significance comes in conflict with the limited subjective interests of the class which has originally set them free. . . .

In order to attain the stage of economic development, which lays the foundation of socialist society, the system of commodity production on the basis of private ownership of the entire means and conditions of production is not altogether indispensable. What is indispensable is firstly the freedom of the forces of production, and secondly introduction of the mechanical means of production. In a certain historical epoch, determined by the prevailing objective world conditions, the process took place under capitalism. In a different historical epoch under different world conditions the process will be accomplished differently. Thus will happen in India. The destructive aspect of the bourgeois revolution must be completed and growth of modern large-scale industry fomented. Since the latter condition cannot be realized except through the continuous expansion of the social reserve fund, UNPAID surplus labour must be performed, and thus [the] economy will to some extent and some sense retain [a] capitalist character. But progressive abolition of private property in the social reserve fund will transform the economic system into an integral part of Socialist Condition. The specific type of the revolutionary state of Democratic Dictatorship, itself created by specific economic conditions, will be the guarantee for this type of transitional economy. . . .

Successful culmination of the struggle against imperialism and its native allies will be the establishment of a state to fortify the position of the revolutionary classes. The direct outcome of the capture of power by the oppressed and exploited classes will be [a] new relation in the process of production. It will devolve upon the classes more or less engaged in the actual production, and will be exercised in common through the revolutionary state of Democratic Dictatorship. In the new economic system UNPAID surplus labour will be still performed, but the reserve fund created thereby will be owned in common through the state and consciously employed as the lever for a rapid (much more rapid than under the leadership of bourgeoisie) revolutionary transformation of the means and conditions of production.

The formation of an economic community which grows out of the conditions of production is founded upon and determined by the specific form of performance of unpaid surplus labour (Marx). When the unpaid surplus labour is performed with means of production not owned by the bourgeoisie, and under conditions of production not controlled by them, it cannot be the basis of capitalism. It becomes the basis of a transitional economic system in which the revolutionization and socialization of the means and conditions of production take place simultaneously, acting as mutual impetus. In the last analysis, distribution of course is governed by the basic character of production, and in the new economic system production, strictly speaking, will retain capitalistic character. But production itself again is promoted in the greatest degree by a method of distribution which permits all social departments to develop and express their capacities to the fullest extent (Engels). The uneven distribution in the capitalist society is caused by the chaotic mode of capitalist production. But ultimately [the] capitalist mode of production stagnated largely in consequence of the specific form of distribution associated with it. Private appropriation of the value of unpaid surplus labour places insurmountable limitations upon capitalist production. The abolition of private property in this lever of social progress will open up unbounded possibilities for production, even when it will still retain some capitalist character. This will be overcome in course of the rapid unfolding of the great possibilities of production. A new method of distribution will quicken production, particularly of the means of production. Modern large-scale industry will grow much more rapidly than under private ownership. There will be no restriction upon mechanical and technological advance, and its practical application.

The first act of the revolutionary State of Democratic Dictatorship will be to accomplish the basic task of the bourgeois revolution, namely, to abolish parasitic ownership of the main means of production which, in an agricultural country like India, is land. Feudal, semi-feudal, and akin forms of non-productive ownership of land, on the one hand, check the unfolding of the forces of production, and on the other, the economic conditions resulting from these relations of property in the basic means of production constitute, so to say, the social basis of foreign imperialism. The abolition [. . .] will transform the agricultural surplus labour, that is the surplus labour of a great majority of the Indian people, into a social reserve fund, a mighty lever to stimulate the growth of the forces of production. This will be realized through the nationalization of land by the revolutionary state of Democratic Dictatorship. The ownership of the land will be vested theoretically in the entire community constituting the social basis of the revolutionary state. For practical purposes, it will however be transformed to [ownership by] those actually cultivating it. The peasant's virtual [as distinct from legal] ownership of the land will be realized in the ownership of the entire product of his labour which will be established through the abolition of rent and all other feudal and semi-feudal (including colonial) charges.

The peasant's only liability (as the cultivator of the soil) will be the land tax to be regulated by the standard of produce on the principle that by far the larger part of the surplus should be left in the possession of the producers. This readjustment of the relation of property in land will be the source of a tremendous impetus to the development of the means and methods and conditions of its cultivation. Knowing that to him belongs the larger part of his produce, the peasant will be encouraged to increase it, and having the greater part of the surplus produce left in his possession, and being secure against other taxation, he will be in the position to do so by acquiring improved means of production (implements, cattle, etc.). Improvement in the economic condition of the peasantry and the resulting impetus to agricultural production will promote trade. The ability of the peasants to buy more manufactured goods (articles for consumption as well as means of production) will foment industrial development. Industrial development, in its turn, will remove the restriction placed upon agricultural production by overcrowding of the land. . . .

The absence of any legal right of private ownership will be a check upon the concentration of land in individual possession. The peasants will not have the right to sell their land which will not legally belong to them as private individuals. The average peasant's holding is very small. It cannot be enlarged by any redistribution of the land. As a matter of fact, any redistribution will make the average holding smaller, because a very large number of peasants at present live on what is called 'uneconomic holding'. On the basis of such small holding, it is not possible to introduce modern mechanical implements of agriculture even with the larger part of the surplus produce left in the possession of the peasants. . . . The surplus value left in the possession of individual peasants will be pooled with the purpose of acquiring agricultural machinery for common use. The state will foment, direct, and control the process through agricultural banks which will advance the credit for the collective purchase of agricultural machinery.

The state organs of agricultural credit will thus acquire control of the rural trade, thereby preventing the rise of the capitalist exchange of commodities on the basis of the peasant's individual ownership of the produce of his labour on land. The peasants will not be allowed to transform the ownership of the produce of his land and labour into the means to exploit the labour power of others. Unpaid surplus labour performed will not lead to private aggrandizement either of individuals or of a class.

It will swell the social reserve fund, employed for common welfare. Mechanization and the consequent collectivization of agriculture, as well as cooperative regulation of the internal trade—all these will be conditional upon the growth of modern large-scale industry and of the nature of ownership thereof. Nationalization of the key industries (metallurgy, mining, transport, and power) as well as of others of national importance (textile, plantations, etc.) by the revolutionary State of Democratic Dictatorship is an objective necessity. Nationalization will mean the elimination of the capitalist profit, interest, and rent which together absorb the major portion of the surplus value. The result of this will be a tremendous impetus to those industries. Firstly, because the entire surplus value created will be reinvested for the expansion of the industry. No part of accumulated capital, that is the social reserve fund created by the unpaid surplus labour, will be withdrawn from the process of production. Secondly, industrial expansion will be freed from the calculations about the rates of profit, etc. which at present place a serious restriction upon it. Unpaid surplus labour will be performed still, but will fully play its role as the lever for the revolutionary transformation of the means and conditions of production. It will not represent exploitation of labour, but a voluntary contribution for the rapid social development in common interest.

Freed from the dead-charges of profit, interest, and rent, the nationalized industries will well afford to increase wages and reduce working hours, thereby drawing more workers in the process of production. More workers absorbed in industries will relieve overcrowding of land. Productive employment of labour in constantly increasing volume will mean increase of national wealth. This, in its turn, being in the form of a community-owned social reserve fund, will quicken productive activity recurringly. The revolutionization of the means and methods of production will be accomplished much more rapidly than under private ownership. . . .

The rise of cooperative organs for the exchange of commodities will gradually eliminate private trade, and the relation between industry and agriculture will be harmonized. The ability of the manufacturing industry to place at the disposal of the peasant modern agricultural machines on credit or at a cheap price will in course of time kill the incipient bourgeois in him and transform him into a factor of social production. The more labour will be withdrawn from agriculture thanks to the growth of manufacturing industries, the greater will be the objective necessity for the application of modern machine to the cultivation of land. Revolution of the means and methods of production in every branch happens in proportion to the surplus value created, and the amount of surplus value in its turn increases in proportion to the rise in the productivity of labour. Thus the objective condition for the revolutionization of agricultural production and the fulfilment of that condition both depend upon the selfsame agency, namely, the growth of modern industry. It will first withdraw labour from agriculture and then meet the consequent demand for labour-saving machinery.

In view of this relative importance of the different branches of production, the decisive control of [the] entire economy and consequently the dominating position in the state devolves upon the class connected with modern industry. By its very nature, modern industry involves two classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the role of the latter being essential under all conditions, whereas that of the former is but a historical accident. The elimination of the bourgeoisie from the revolutionary state of the Democratic Dictatorship will place the proletariat in decisive control of the entire economy of the transition period and consequently make it the determining factor of the revolutionary political power.

The process of the revolutionization of the means and conditions of production, which will proceed so much more quickly in the absence of the interests of capitalist exploitation checking it (and the bourgeoisie using political power in the same interests), will with corresponding rapidity change the class composition of the revolutionary state. The proletariat will be constantly on the ascendancy, numerically as well as regarding economic position and political power. The class that dominated in economy will also be dominating in politics. The proletarianization, however, will not take place in consequence of class exploitation. It will indicate growing predominance of higher means and advanced methods of production over inferior means and backward methods. It represents the elevation of the level of national economy as a whole. It will signify gradual welding of all the producing classes into a homogenous community.

The accomplishment of the positive aspect of the bourgeois revolution thus will not create a new set of class antagonism to bring about the proletarian revolution. Taking place under the leadership of the proletariat, the bourgeois revolution will directly transform itself into the socialist revolution. Ordinarily, the bourgeois revolution ceases to be a revolution in the strictest sense as soon as it frees the new forces of production from the fetters of the old social order. The newly established capitalist mode of production objectively performs the revolutionary role, but the bourgeois state very soon becomes the organ of counter-revolution, and the subjective class interest of the bourgeoisie militates against the objectively revolutionary significance of the capitalist mode of production. When really the revolutionary aspect of the bourgeois revolution, that is, the destruction of the economic relations checking the free development of the forces of production and of the political power fortifying those relations, is performed by the oppressed and exploited masses, not under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, but of the proletatiat and indeed against the opposition of the bourgeoisie themselves who actually defend the established order in that case, the post-revolutionary conditions naturally outgrow the bounds of the class interests of the bourgeoisie. Consequently it does not create a new set of class antagonism, but consciously lays down the foundation of an economic system higher than capitalism, and itself becomes the immediate prelude to a deeper social transformation. In short, proletarian leadership revolutionizes the positive achievements of the bourgeois revolution. This will happen in India as the historical significance of the period of transition.

Section IV

The final goal

The historic mission of the proletariat is to remake the world. It will not only establish a new mode of production, it is the pioneer of a new civilization, a new type of human culture. In the past history of the evolution of society, the victory of a new class established the domination of that class over the entire society. The victorious class utilized the control of production and political power to maintain itself as a class, to suppress and exploit other classes. The position and relation of classes changed from time to time, but society as a whole remained class-ridden, dominated by a particular ruling class in a particular epoch of history. In order to maintain its privileged position the ruling class placed obstacles to the free development of the mode and means of production which it had previously freed from the fetters of an older form of social relations. The victory of the proletariat will produce entirely different results. By its very nature, the proletatiat strives not to perpetuate but to abolish itself as a class. Its mission is to reconstruct society so as to absorb all the adult and able-bodied members of the community in the process of production, to 'proletarianize' the entire society, so to say. When the entire society becomes identified with one class, the latter ceases to be a class. So the historic mission of the proletariat is to abolish all the classes, including itself.

This historic mission makes the proletariat the standard-bearer of a new philosophy (science of life). Commensurate with the mission of building a new social order on the basis of common ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, the proletariat develops a monistic conception of the world (*Weltanschauung*). Dialectic materialism is the philosophy of the proletariat, and consequently the ideological basis of the new human culture which will develop in communist society. So long as society remains split up into classes, the cardinal principle of human thought is a dualist conception of life as well as of the universe. Religion, speculative philosophy, and finally abstract idealism are the main landmarks in the evolution of dualist cosmological conception. The rise of the proletariat as the harbinger of a classless society challenges the old world materially as well as ideologically. Together with the proletariat, there arises the revolutionary philosophy of materialistic monism based upon the grand achievements of physical science—a synthesis of all olrder human thoughts.

Religion, speculative philosophy, abstract idealism—all these represent the ideology of the ruling class. In multifarious forms they justify class domination and teach the masses obedience, subservience, resignation, and innumerable other 'virtues' which persuade them to accept the established order as something permanent. Emphasizing upon the 'spiritual' essence of existence, the masses are taught to accept the miseries of material life with cheerful resignation or fatalism. As the liberator of the toiling masses from age-long slavery, the proletariat confronts the ideological system of the ruling class with a revolutionary philosophy. Examining history in the light of the great achievements of science, the proletariat discovers that ever since its foundation human society has been constantly changing; that the only thing permanent in existence is change; that the motive force of social evolution is the continuous development of the forces of production; and [society is] constantly changed according to the change of material conditions of life. The cardinal principle of the proletarian philosophy of dialectic materialism, a philosophy evolved out of the scientific examination of life, historically, socially, universally, and cosmologically, is that existence is not determined by consciousness, but on the contrary, human consciousness is determined by the conditions of material existence. There does not exist an abstract consciousness outside material existence guiding and determining itself. The so called 'spiritual' aspect of life grows out of the material existence, itself being nothing but a form of the latter.

The revolutionary conception of life knocks the bottom of the ideology of class domination in all forms—religion, speculative philosophy, abstract idealism, etc. It reveals that 'conflict is the mother of all happening' (Heraclitus), that 'contradiction is the power that moves things'. In order to grasp and explain the dialectics of nature and society, the proletariat adopts dialectics as the method of its ideology. Proletarian philosophy does not measure things by any fixed criterion. It approaches every phenomenon, ideological or material, with the knowledge of the only immutable law—the law of change or constant motion. In course of time the useful becomes harmful, right becomes wrong, laws and institutions become antiquated, in conflict with the living interests of life. There begins a struggle between the established old and nascent new forces in its womb, between the positive and the negative, between the thesis and the antithesis. Out of the struggle eventually grows a new factor representing a synthesis of the two conflicting factors, the negation of the negation. This process governing evolution in all branches of existence operates also in society. Everything that retards the growth of this force—material contradictions and the corresponding ideological conceptions—are brakes upon human progress. They must be combated and destroyed.

Objectively and historically, this is the philosophy of the proletariat. The growth of the revolutionary ideology coincides with the rise of the revolutionary class. But the entire class does not become conscious of its mission all at once. The physical growth of the class itself is a process, the tempo [speed] of which depends upon the development of the means of production. And the consciousness of the class is determined by its material existence, its internal composition, its relation with other classes, political conditions under which it develops, so on and so forth. To begin with, therefore, the ideology of the proletariat is expressed by its most advanced section which organizes itself as the leader of the class in the historic mission. The leader of the Indian proletariat, that is the Communist Party, therefore stands firmly on the ground of historic materialism. It will carry on a vigorous ideological fight against all beliefs, traditions, and prejudices which still have great hold upon the young Indian proletariat. The economic development during the transition period will undermine religious beliefs and social institutions (caste system, etc.). But the Communist Party as the organ of the revolutionary proletarian consciousness will expedite the objective process, so as to quicken the ideological growth of the class.

The revolutionization of the means and conditions of production having been accomplished [during the transitional period] to the point of providing a solid basis for Socialist economy, there will begin the actual construction of the Communist social order. The vital condition to be fulfilled is the growth of the proletariat as a class numerically, economically, and ideologically. This condition will also be realized during the period of transition. Rapid development of modern large-scale industry will cause a redistribution of the population. A large number of people will be liberated from the drudgery of toiling with primitive tools and backward conditions of production. Machine[s] will increase productivity of labour. What is produced today by 20, 50, or even 100 people will be done by a few working under much better conditions. When some useful labour will be performed by every adult and able-bodied member of the community with highly developed mechanical means of production, all the essential requirements for all will be met by the expenditure of a small fraction of social labour. The social reserved fund will grow to unheard-of dimensions, opening up immense possibilities for further social progress.

Socialization of the means of production will make man the master of his own creation. He will not be a slave of the monster [the machine] that he has himself created; but he will be its master, using it first for his liberation from the drudgery of slave labour, therefore the conquest of nature. A small fraction of social labour being required for the production of the necessities of life and expansion of the social reserve fund, there will be plenty of leisure for all. This will create conditions for the democratization of knowledge and culture. The division of labour between physical and mental will break down. Higher education will be brought within the reach of all. Wide discussion of scientific knowledge will raise technology to ever higher levels. Conquest of nature will cease to be due to accidental discoveries or inventions by 'great men' and 'geniuses'. It will be systematically organized; isolation of theory and practice, of knowledge and labour, will disappear. They will be united. The same individual will be able to think and put the thought into practical sphere. Classes will disappear in consequence of the common ownership of the means of production, and democratization of knowledge resulting from the new economic conditions will prevent the stratification of society into castes. Society will be free by freeing every one of its members. In a community of free individuals there will be no need for the state which will 'wither away' (Marx). *Communist social order will thus be realized as the voluntary association of free men all contributing to mutual subsistence and mutual progress. There will be a new culture, a new civilization. The human race will open a new chapter in its history.*

Our motto is:

On the road to socialism through national freedom and democratic revolution.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Notes

[1] This was written at the time of the Weimar Republic in Germany, before it was subverted and the Nazis established their totalitarian dictatorship. SNR.

[2] Earlier and much more detailed characterization of contemporary Indian society on these lines was made by Roy in his 'Supplementary Theses' (1920), *India in Transition* (1922), *The Future of Indian Politics* (1926), 'On the Indian Question' at the Sixth World Congress of the C. I. (1929), etc. See *Selected Works of M. N. Roy, Vols I, II, and III.* SNR.

[3] *Report of the Indian Industrial Commission, 1916–18*, cmd. 51 of 1919. SNR.

[4] The *Report of the Indian Fiscal Commission 1921–22*, cmd. 1724 of 1922, recommended that protection be given 'with discrimination to certain selected industries'. On 10 July 1923, the Legislative Assembly passed a resolution appointing a Tariff Board and adopting a 'policy of discriminating protection'. V. Anstey, *The Economic Development of India*, London, 1957, p. 352. SNR.

[5] *Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India*, cmd. 3232, 1928. This includes 16 volumes of evidence. There is also an *Abridged Report*, 1928. SNR.

[6] On 12 February 1922 the Congress Working Committee met at Bardoli and resolved to suspend mass civil disobedience. People were instructed to pay up the taxes. Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, 1935, p. 398. SNR.

[7] Parts of this section were incorporated by Roy in *My Defence*. The section has been abbreviated; exclusions are indicated by ellipses (. . .). The full text of *My Defence* is included in *Selected Works of M.N. Roy, Vol. III.* SNR.

WHITHER CONGRESS? A MANIFESTO
(1934)

Introductory editorial note

After the failure of the Round Table Conference and Gandhi's return to India on 28 December 1931, the Congress Working Committee decided to resume Civil Disobedience. The government responded by imposing a series of drastic Ordinances, making arrests on a large scale and taking harsh punitive measures. Gandhi and virtually all Congress leaders were imprisoned, and the government took possession of Congress offices and *ashrams*. During 1932 and 1933, Congressmen who were not in jail were obliged to adopt methods of secrecy to keep in touch with one another and to maintain the Civil Disobedience campaign. Sessions of Congress delegates were, nonetheless, held in spite of police vigilance in April 1932 in Delhi and on 31 March 1933 in Calcutta, where resolutions were passed reiterating complete Independence as the goal of the Congress, endorsing the revival of Civil Disobedience, and expressing complete faith in Gandhi's leadership and in the principle of non-violence. Although 'about 2,200 delegates were elected from different parts of the country' to attend the session at Calcutta, 'more than a thousand of them were arrested before their start or while on their way to Calcutta.' The session was, of course, banned by the government, but nonetheless 'about eleven-hundred delegates met in the place selected for the session. The police were soon upon the scene and *lathi*s rained on the peaceful assembly of Congressmen. . . ., despite the continuance of the *lathi* blows the inner group of the delegates maintained their seats until all the seven resolutions . . . were read out and adopted.' (Indian National Congress, *General Secretaries Report for 1933–34*, Bombay, 1934).

On 8 May 1933, Gandhi in jail started 'a self-purificatory fast for 21 days', and he was immediately released. He at once recommended temporary suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement for six weeks, and the suspension was formally announced by the Acting President of the Congress, M. S. Aney. The government, however, refused to negotiate with the Congress unless Civil Disobedience was completely abandoned, not temporarily suspended.

On 12–13 July 1933 an informal Conference of Congressmen was held in Poona which was twice addressed at length by Gandhi. There were heated debates, but in the end the conference authorized Gandhi to seek a settlement with the government. However, the Viceroy refused to grant an interview to Gandhi. The Congress, nevertheless, suspended Mass Civil Disobedience, and 'all Congress organizations and war councils ceased to function in view of the suspension of mass Satyagraha' (B. P. Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, p. 944). Gandhi now inaugurated the campaign of individual Civil Disobedience. But before he could commence his Satyagraha he was again arrested on

1 August. He began a fast in jail and was released on 23 August. He then decided to refrain personally from Civil Disobedience for a year and to devote himself fully to the Harijan cause.

On 31 March 1934 a Conference of Congress leaders was held in Delhi under the presidentship of Dr M. A. Ansari, which resolved that 'the All-India Swaraj Party which had been in abeyance should be revived in order to enable Congressmen . . . to undertake a thorough organization of the electorate . . . The Conference also expressed the view that it was imperative for the Party to participate in the forthcoming elections to the General Assembly' (Sitaramayya, ibid., pp. 951–2). The Conference sent a deputation to Gandhi who was at that time in earthquake-devastated Bihar. After full discussion with the deputation Gandhi issued on 7 April a press statement in which he advised 'all Congressmen to suspend civil resistance for Swaraj'. The statement was a result of 'an intense intropection, searching of the heart, and waiting upon God'. In the accompanying letter to Dr Ansari he declared (5 April 1934): 'I have no hesitation in welcoming the revival of the Swarajya Party and the decision of the meeting [in Delhi] to take part in the forthcoming elections to the Assembly' (Sitaramayya, ibid., pp.953–4).

It was the news of the Delhi Conference that prompted Roy to write 'Whither Congress?' A Manifesto. Written in Central Prison, Bareilly on 15 April 1934, it was smuggled out like his other political letters and articles of the jail period. A copy of the text is preserved in the M. N. Roy Archives (File No. 111/2, Nehru Memorial Museum, New Delhi).

About a month after Delhi another Congress Conference was held at Ranchi on 2 and 3 May 1934 which approved the resolutions reviving the Swaraj Party and contesting the Assembly elections. The programme of the Swaraj Party was also formulated at the Ranchi Conference. Finally, the All-India Congress Committee met at Patna on 18 and 19 May 1934. It formally suspended Civil Disobedience on 20 May, endorsed the Swaraj Party's plan for contesting the forthcoming elections, and appointed a Parliamentary Board to 'run and control elections of members to the Legislature on behalf of the Congress' (*INC General Secretaries Report 1933–34*, p. 9). There was vehement opposition from the Royists, the Socialists, and other left-wingers to Council-entry, but in Gandhi's presence it 'vanished into thin air' (Sitaramayya, ibid., p. 960). Three weeks later the government's prohibitory order on the Congress was lifted.

While writing the Manifesto Roy's mind was occupied also with other great issues. The threat to civilization from the very aggressive Nazi power in Germany profoundly disturbed him, and he urged on his friends in the Communist Opposition to seek 'a reunion of communist forces' in view of the emergency. At the same time we find him asking for books and materials on Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty, on the

Quantum Theory, and on 'the latest biological theories' (Letter to Ellen Gottschalk from Central Prison, Bareilly, 21 April 1934). The meta-political elements of his lifelong quest of freedom and truth found time to develop and express themselves during his lonely and rigorous prison years.

SNR.

Whither Congress? A Manifesto

I

The decision of the Delhi Conference to revive the Swaraj party indicates a definite turn of the Congress politics towards the Right. A great majority of the Congress leaders were present at the Conference. The decision, therefore, reflects the tendency of the leadership as a whole. The Mahatma has conferred his blessing upon the decision, sooner than the most optimist expected.[1] This action of the Mahatma renders meaningless the attitude of the few leaders who still stick to the bankrupt policy of Civil Disobedience.

Once again a momentous change in the Congress politics is made without consulting the membership. Once again leaders have committed the Congress to a policy utterly disregarding the sentiment of the rank and file. Let alone the masses of the members and adherents; even the minor leaders of the movement have been deprived of the right of participating in the making of such a fateful and fatal decision. The leaders of a democratic movement have no regard for the very elementary principles. Nor is it a question of academic principle. Experience has shown that whenever leaders made momentous changes in the Congress politics without consulting or disregarding the spirit of the masses, the new policy proved to be as futile as the old. The old Swaraj Party degenerated into sterile constitutionalism all but in name and prepared the way for the Round Table Conference. Then it voluntarily liquidated its none too fruitful career. The Bardoli resolution killed a powerful mass movement. The Delhi Pact was the herald of the present prostration of the Congress. All those decisions were acts of irresponsible, and therefore, autocratic leadership. All of them were harmful to the movement. Bitter experience should no longer allow blind faith in the supreme wisdom of the leaders. The leaders must guide the movement according to the spirit of the masses. Otherwise, they are bound to mislead or betray. Once again, the Congress is going to be misled and betrayed. Should it be allowed?

The Poona Conference was much more representative than the conclave in Delhi. Through a large number of local leaders present there, the Poona Conference, to some extent, reflected the mood of the masses. It is true that those demanding a change of policy did not present a definite left-wing programme; but the gene ral tendency of the local leaders was a move to the left—for the adoption of a more effective form of militant action. When the demand for a change came from the masses, the Mahatma obstinately opposed it. But today he graciously endorses a turn to the right decided by the leaders in an informal conference with no authority to make such a fundamental decision. The inference is clear. The Mahatma would not permit the Congress to abandon the bankrupt tactics of Civil Disobedience with the object of adopting a more effective form of militant mass action; but a turn to the Right—to neo-constitutionalism—he readily sanctions on the flimsy pretext that he does so without changing his views about the usefulness of the legislatures under present conditions, and his faith in Civil Disobedience. Despite the sophistry with which the Mahatma justifies his action, the fundamental fact is that the leaders are resolved to follow a line of policy which represents repudiation of the creed, programme, and objective striving of the Congress.

The Independence Resolution of Lahore goes by the board. The 'economic programme' of Karachi is thrown into the scrap-heap. The revolutionary struggle for national freedom is to be liquidated in favour of parliamentary manoeuvres with the object of striking the best bargain in a base compromise with imperialism.

The resurrected Swaraj Party, that is to say, the Congress as represented by the present leaders, will reject the White Paper scheme.[2] This is an empty gesture. For, according to the decision of the Delhi Conference, the new policy of the Congress will be to stand by the 'National Demand' presented by the Mahatma at the Second Round Table Conference. What was that demand? That 'national' demand itself represented a repudiation of the 'Independence Resolution' of the Congress by its sole representative.

If the programme of independence is to be seriously taken, it means that the Congress is committed to a revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle. The programme indirectly calls for separation from the British Empire and the Indian people can never argue out of the chains of colonial slavery. Nevertheless, the Mahatma, as the sole accredited representative of the Congress to the Second R. T. C., declared that India was willing to accept 'equal partnership in the Empire'. And according to him, slavery would become partnership provided that the new constitution included some control over the finance and military—a demand, if conceded, would mean a concession not to the Indian masses but to the upper classes. But the Mahatma was careful to make it understood that he was not giving an ultimatum; that he was ready to negotiate on the condition on which he would have the Congress accept 'equal partnership'. Thus, it is a pure fiction that the Mahatma went to London, laid down his condition (of Independence and nothing but Independence) and came back, when his term was not accepted forthwith, to continue the 'war'. The Second R. T. C. was not broken up by the Mahatma's intransigence. He came back empty-handed, owing to his woeful ineptitude as a politician. By his readiness to compromise, he encouraged the British Government to doubt the strength of the movement he represented. He was sent back home to bring the Congress round to his view—to give up the programme of Independence in favour of 'equal partnership'. But the arrogant autocrat who had, in the meantime, occupied the viceregal throne, wanted to force the Congress into a struggle just at the moment its forces were all put to sleep with the silly song of 'victory'. The second Civil Disobedience campaign was launched not because the Mahatma came back to renew the 'war' (he came to work for peace), but for the sake of his vanity—because the Viceroy would not give him an interview.

To go back to the 'National Demand' as presented by the Mahatma at the Second R. T. C., is to repudiate the programme of Independence and to commit the Congress to 'equal partnership' within the British Empire. The new policy inaugurated at the Delhi Conference and sanctioned by the Mahatma, proposes this backsliding. It is a betrayal. One should not mince words in this fateful moment.

In view of this palpable implication of the new policy, the rejection of the White Paper scheme is an empty gesture, made to drive a bargain at the last moment. If the rejection of the White Paper was a rejection on the principle, then the demand for 'equal partnership' must also go. For, those who reject on principle the White Paper or any alternative scheme of constitution framed by a similar body, must challenge the self-arrogated prerogative of the British Parliament to dictate the political destiny of India. The goal of 'equal partnership' is not compatible with such a challenge. The fact that the leaders would commit the Congress to the ideal of 'equal partnership' proves that their rejection of the White Paper is not rejection on principle. It does not represent a challenge to the authority of the British Parliament. It does not imply the demand for the right of self-determination. It is merely a protest against certain details of the scheme. The attitude of the Congress towards the White Paper thus ceases to be any different from that of the Liberal Federation or of those even more to the right. Let some of the details be improved, and the Congress leaders would agree to work the constitution, for what it is worth, and it would not be difficult to persuade the Mahatma to welcome the new constitution as containing the 'Substance of Independence', and the Mahatma, in his turn, would know how to cajole the Congress to follow him blindly. No matter how far the leaders would go eventually, the accomplished fact is that they have repudiated the creed of Independence.

It is not the first time that the ideal of Independence is set aside. It was done at the Karachi Congress through the instrument of the Delhi Pact. At that time, the movement was prevented from grasping the implication of the policy followed by the leaders through the adoption of the 'economic programme'. While the leaders were conspiring to take the Congress away from the path of national democratic revolution, they were held as Apostles of Socialism. It is silly, indeed sheer hypocrisy, to talk about Socialism when you are ready to compromise with imperialism. A successful anti-imperialist struggle—triumphant national democratic revolution—is the *sine qua non* for the realization of Socialism. No socialist—no conscious member of the working class—of course, took the 'economic programme' seriously. They looked upon it as an instrument of deception. The Left-wing of the Congress, however, was greatly enthused. In that groundless enthusiasm, the reformist deviation on the vital issue of the anti-imperialist struggle was not noticed.

Presently the 'economic programme' became a dead letter. Now, the Delhi Conference has given it an unceremonious burial. It has curtly rejected the proposal for the adoption of an economic programme. There is, however, no politics without economics. Every political policy is determined by some economic interest. Every political party is formed to defend or advance the economic interest of this or that class. The resurrected Swaraj Party will have its economic programme. Its founders have declined to accept an economic programme reflecting the interests of the masses. Why? Because such a programme—even the colourless one adopted at Karachi—would deprive it of the support of the upper classes, whose votes it wishes to catch.

The economic programme of the Swaraj Party is an old familiar story. It was the programme of Indian capitalism. Worse still: it included the defence of parasitic landlordism. C. R. Das's cry 'Swaraj for the 90 per cent' had alarmed the upper classes. So, it was made clear that the party would fight for the interests of capitalism, and the landlords were praised as pillars of society, which should be zealously guarded against any possible blow. In the Legislature the party fought valiantly for Indian capitalism and totally disregarded the elementary welfare of the workers. It did absolutely nothing for the peasants. At least in one province, namely Bengal, it threw out a Government Bill for tenancy reform, which placed some restriction on the right of the landlords to rack-rent the peasantry. In Punjab, it defeated a private member's Bill which proposed control of usury in defence of the peasant. There can be [no] doubt about the economic programme of the revived Swaraj Party. Its economic programme is totally antagonistic to the 'economic programme' of Karachi. The rejection of the latter is, therefore, a corollary to the new policy adopted by the Congress leaders.

The refusal to adopt a programme of economic betterment of the masses is a cynical betrayal of the cherished ideal of the Congress. Shall this go unchallanged? Let it be understood that the new party will misappropriate the prestige of the Congress. Before long, its policy will be the policy of the Congress, unless its action is repudiated without delay: unless the Congress does something energetic in defence of its ideal, and in active pursuit thereof.

The Congress stands on a crossing of ways. The alternatives before it have been very aptly indicated recently by Sardar Sardul Singh as relapse into liberalism or armed insurrection. The decision of the Delhi conference and its endorsement by the Mahatma leave no room for any doubt about the road the leaders want to take. They have chosen the safe road of a relapse into liberalism. But it is a blind alley for the oppressed masses.

The road to the liberation of the masses lies through the revolution. The antagonism between the present leaders of the Congress and the masses of the nationalist movement is irreconcilable. The leaders must betray the masses unless these can strike out their own way under a new revolutionary leadership. A great betrayal is in preparation. Let us frustrate it. Let us liberate the movement for national freedom from the leaders who refuse to lead it on the road to victory. Let us transform the Congress into the organ of a mighty mass movement against foreign imperialism and national reaction.

II

There is no use in entertaining the illusion that the Delhi decision does not affect the Congress which will continue to be faithful to its creed and programme. Such illusions will be dangerous. When all the outstanding leaders of a movement adopt a new policy, the movement is automatically committed to it unless it definitely rejects the policy and then disowns the leaders. The Delhi decision, in course of time, will inevitably become the policy of the Congress unless the Congress adopts an alternative policy in opposition to it. The policy of 'no-change'—of sticking to a form a struggle which has failed—will mean tacit acceptance of the new policy. This was the case in the last no-change vs. pro-change controversy. It will be the same this time.

Since the no-change majority of the Congress failed to adopt an alternative line of activity, it lost all political significance. In consequence, the programme of the Swaraj Party became the programme of the Congress. Political passivity on the part of the majority permitted the minority to become the dominating factor and impose its will upon the majority. The relapse of the Congress to neo-constitutionalism promises to be quicker this time thanks to the accommodating attitude of the Mahatma. Only political initiative on the part of the rank and file can avert that catastrophe.

To secure the Mahatma's sanction for their repudiation of his bankrupt policy, not in favour of a more effective policy of revolutionary mass action, but of the policy of relapse into neo-constitutionalism; the right-wing leaders pledge lip loyalty to the gods of the Mahatma. The Delhi decision, while repudiating it in practice, does not so much as mention the Civil Disobedience movement. Further, the 'Constructive programme', advocated by the Mahatma at the Poona Conference, in opposition to the demand for the calling off of the Civil Disobedience campaign, remains in force—formally. The main items of the 'Constructive programme' are removal of untouchability or uplift of the Depressed Classes, Khadi, Swadeshi, prohibition of alchoholic drinks, cottage industries, agricultural improvement, and labour organizations. These are all old familiar gods—with clay feet. Years of experience have demonstrated that to worship at their shrines is a dreary cult. The new 'programme' is but an elaboration of the famous 'constructive programme' of Bardoli, which owing to its impracticability, signally failed to enthuse the nationalist masses, disorganized and demoralized by the sudden and entirely unwarranted retreat.[3] The economic items of the programme are positively reactionary or, at the best, represent the demand for some petty reform. In short, it is not a political programme. It cannot serve the purpose of a lever for developing the political activity of the masses. It is not the programme of a militant mass action. It is the cult of political passivity.

Thus, when the right wing is striking out a path of political activity dictated by the interests of Indian capitalism, the bulk of the movement will be condemned to a period of political passivity. The inevitable result of this arrangement will be the submission of the Congress, as a whole, to the right wing policy—which means repudiation of the programme of the Congress, which means negation of the objective striving of the nationalist movement; which means liquidation of the revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle; which means surrender of the masses to colonial slavery in consideration of some concession to Indian capitalism; which means a check to the development of the Democratic National Revolution.

The past history of the Swaraj Party should teach us that the new venture cannot mean anything else. The parliamentary activities of the Swaraj Party did not bring the country any nearer to Swaraj. On the contrary, the vision of Swaraj receded further and further. The 'National Demand' was progressively watered down. The dyarchy could neither be ended nor mended. The Swaraj Party could not break the Councils. The Councils broke it. Anybody who would maintain that the Swaraj Party was a successful political experiment, as the right wing of the Congress does, must answer these questions: Why did, then, the Swaraj Party liquidate itself? Why did, then, the Congress return to Non-Co-operation? The Swaraj Party liquidated itself because it signally failed to accomplish anything. Had it continued in existence any longer, it must accept office, that is, become a willing instrument of colonial exploitation of the Indian masses. The Congress returned to Non-Cooperation because the growing fighting mood of the politically revolutionary masses would not allow it to be further compromised by the Swarajist neo-constitutionalism. History does not allow any other answer to the above questions.

The leaders of the Swarajist revival naturally do not want to repeat the debacle. In order to be more successful than in the past, this time the party must go the whole length of the fateful journey which is the logical outcome of its policy. It must go to the extent of occupying office under the new Constitution. The Congress is being committed to this course.

The Congress will not be able to avoid this inglorious journey to a compromise with Imperialism, on terms dictated by the latter, unless it definitely stands on the only other alternative road—the way of revolutionary mass action leading up to armed insurrection. The Gandhian ideology of the Congress has not permitted it to move in this direction, and has, therefore, brought it to the gate of neo-constitutionalism. Should the Congress not enter the realm of futility, the house of shame, it must disown the ideology which has brought it to the very gate of that realm. The adhesion to the Gandhian ideology must deliver the Congress to the right wing policy, must force it to betray its ideal, repudiate its programme and disown its cherished profession regarding the welfare of the masses.

The search for a ground between the two extremes will end in political passivity. The Congress must either fight Imperialism or surrender. There is no middle course. Those who propose to steer the Congress in an imaginary middle course simply deceive their followers. The middle course is the diehard adherence to a naïve political cult which has miserably failed and which cannot be revived, plus the 'constructive programme', which is a programme of political inactivity. If the movement could be steered in this course of political passivity, the field would be free for the right wing. Thus, the middle-roaders are actually allies of the right wing. Those who are really opposed to the change as inaugurated by the Delhi Conference must not allow themselves to be deceived by the lure of the imaginary golden mean. The right wing policy of compromise and capitulation can be combated only by a revolutionary left wing programme of militant mass action.

The present leadership of the Congress must be overthrown. There must appear a courageous new revolutionary leadership to take command. Definite crystallization of the left wing is hindered by the lingering faith in Civil Disobedience. The disapproval of the projected reversal to neo-constitutionalism is generally expressed through obstinate adherence to the tactics of Civil Disobedience which is looked upon as the direct action of the masses. Those who still persist in not admitting that in the last Civil Disobedience campaign the Congress has been defeated, are incorrigible. They are the middle-roaders—the tacit allies of the right wing. But there are others who admit the defeat, but would not agree that thereby the efficacy of the Civil Disobedience has been disproved. They hope to save the Congress through another Civil Disobedience campaign in the future. This hope is based upon the failure to grasp the pernicious implication of the Gandhian ideology which is inseparable from the political policy of the Civil Disobedience.

Direct action of the masses is more efficacious than any other form of action to enforce their demands because it is but the prelude to the application of force—to armed uprising. Precisely for this reason, the demands of a movement, based upon direct action of the masses, are often conceded, at least partially, before the point of clash is reached. The established order makes concessions to the forces of revolt under pressure. Failure to make timely concession would be followed by the open application of force to break down the resistance of the established order. Direct action of the masses implies a threat to subvert the established order by force. In other words, direct action of the masses is a form of applying force in defence of the interest of the oppressed, and it implies that force will be applied in more effective forms if the established order does not give in to popular pressure.

This being the case, the fact of the policy of Civil Disobedience being hitched on to the cult of non-violence deprives it of the potentiality of direct mass action. When a mass movement is preached by its own ideology against applying its latent force (which alone makes it what it is) into practice, even in the case of extreme necessity, it becomes a monstrous futility. Why should the Government fear a movement which is morally bound not to go beyond a limit, and would not retaliate under any circumstances? In the beginning, the Government was not sure that Gandhian ideology could be such a decisive check upon a great mass movement. Therefore, it showed signs of nervousness. But presently it discovered the Achilles' heel, and launched upon a policy of ruthless repression, confident of success. It has come out easily victorious. It has won not so much owing to its own strength, as thanks to the weakness of the movement.

The Civil Disobedience campaign has failed under the burden of its own contradiction. It will fail again and again, unless it is freed from the cult of non-violence. But as soon as the Congress will throw off the paralysing ballast of Gandhian ideology, it will find innumerable channels of mass activity open before it. It will not be necessary to make a politico-religious faith out of one single form of political activity, the efficacy of which is doubtful even under the most favourable circumstances. For, its appeal being purely emotional, it is mostly confined to the urban lower middle-class; it cannot capture and hold for any length of time the workers and peasant masses, who are engrossed by the more practical issues of daily life. Indeed, its Gandhian ideology, particularly the cult of non-violence, compels the Congress to stake its entire fortune on the dark horse of Civil Disobedience. The very conception Civil Disobedience excludes the notion of aggressive struggle. Its ambition is not to fight and conquer. Its ideal is to suffer. The entire conception is saturated with a defeatist spirit—it is the conception of slave mentality.

As a matter of fact, Civil Disobedience, foregoing automatic development into a genuinely militant mass movement, is bound either to degenerate into neo-constitutionalism or to be demoralized and disintegrate after a defeat. Both these tendencies are today clearly discernible in the Congress; and, unfortunately, they are the predominating tendencies.

The Delhi decision is a logical outcome of the Congress politics conceived under the sinister shadow of the Gandhian ideology. It is no accident that it has received the benediction of the Mahatma just for the asking. On the other hand, the political stultification of the orthodox no-changer, the depressing perspective of the imaginary middle course, with its attendant demoralization and disintegration—this is also a consequence of the Gandhian politics.

To survive the crisis, the Congress must be reborn. A new chapter of its history, entirely different from the old, must be opened, just as was done in 1920 with the inauguration of the non-cooperation movement. The Congress must become the organ of a new form of struggle, with a new programme, under a new leadership, inspired by a consciously revolutionary ideology.[4]

III

A programme of action, calculated to stimulate the greatest possible political activity of the masses, under the limitations of the present situation, and a plan for reinforcing the Congress organizationally, have been proposed in a recent 'Address to the Rank and File of the Congress'. Not only in the address but as early as a year ago, we advocated suspension of the Civil Disobedience and recommended the adoption of measures for developing new forms of mass action. We demanded that an ineffective weapon should be discarded in favour of the more efficacious. We agitated for a change in the policy towards the left—its radicalization. We raised the banner of left wing revolt. We sounded the call for a struggle for the leadership of the Congress. We pointed out the danger from the right. We proposed that the left wing must go swiftly to the offensive. We provided a platform for the left wing. But, unfortunately, the majority of the left wing leaders were too slow to act.

They still remained under the spell of Gandhian ideology. Their political radicalism was rendered inoperative by their ideological preoccupations. Their better judgment was overcome by the emotional factor of faith in the wisdom of the great leaders.

Any further delay will seriously jeopardize the future of the Congress. In the absence of a left wing leadership, the right wing politics of neo-constitutionalism will be imposed upon the Congress. It is no time to hesitate. Its experience must dispel illusion. We must act, and swiftly. The future of our struggle for freedom is in danger. Activities, calculated to awaken the political consciousness of the masses, the mobilization of mass energy with the conscious purpose of raising the anti-imperialist movement to the level of a decisive struggle for power—that is the only way to avert the danger. That is the only way to infuse new life into the Congress, enabling it to stand firmly by its ideal of Complete Independence, and to steer courageously the course of revolutionary struggle leading to that goal. . . .

There cannot be any legitimate objection to Congressmen entering the Council. The boycott of the legislatures has been a great blunder from the beginning. But it is a greater blunder to go to the other extreme, as proposed by the Swarajists. To enter the Councils, by itself, is of little value. It can be a useful form of political activity, if and when undertaken as a part of a comprehensive programme of action which will be largely extra-parliamentary mass action. The Congress should have a definite programme. Then it should utilize the legislative, as well as local and municipal bodies, as so many available instruments for developing a mass struggle for the realization of its programme. The elections would then present us with the opportunity to popularize our programme, mobilize the masses in support of that programme, and, in consequence, quicken the political consciousness of the masses.

Such a programme of action is before the Congress. In substance it includes: (1) Development of a mass agitation in support of a number of concretely formulated minimum demands of the oppressed and exploited majority; (2) organization of a mass opposition to the White Paper constitution; (3) to have the cardinal issue of self-determination raised out of the mass movement against the White Paper scheme; and (4) harnessing the mass energy, mobilized in course of the agitation, into popular organs to be created with the purpose of asserting the right of self-determination.

In detail, the programme includes Council-entry, and, particularly, the capture of local and municipal bodies. Having adopted the programme, the Congress should stipulate that any party or individual seeking election to the legislature or any other body in its name, must abide strictly by its programme. Thus, the right wing will be put to an acid test. They must either enter the Councils with a specified task to fight for the concretely defined programme of the Congress or they must be debarred from banking upon the prestige of the Congress for carrying on a policy in crass violation of the cherished ideals of the national revolutionary movement. Should the Swaraj Party refuse to accept the programme of the Congress, it would forfeit the privilege of basking in the glory of the Congress. Indeed, no particular party should be permitted to act in the name of the Congress. The elections should be contested directly by the Congress, as such, according to the provisions of its own programme; parliamentary activities of its members should also be activities of the Congress as such.

The question of Council entry, however, is of minor importance. Nor is it an immediate issue. The immediate task is to foment mass activity. The leaders can do whatever they like, simply because the rank and file of the movement have been deprived of their activity and opinion. The liquidation of the local Congress committees was an immensely greater blow for the movement than the cumulative effect of all the repressive measures of the Government.[5] The reconstruction of these organs of mass activity is the first condition for the revival of the movement and revitalization of the Congress. The new leadership of the Congress must grow out of the activity of those organs. They can be revived by the agitation in support of the proposed programme. The question of illegality is a technical matter. A meeting of the A.I.C.C. was not called on the ground that it had been declared illegal. This, however, did not prevent the right wing leaders to have innumerable conferences, and finally work out a new policy, to be imposed upon the Congress before long. Why can't the left wing act in the same way? Informal meetings of local leaders can be always held, and mass movement on specific demands can be inaugurated and developed by Congressmen, acting through ad hoc committees. The determining factor is the will to act and a definite programme of action. The rank and file are eager for action. Any noticeable apathy or pessimism has been created by the obvious futility of the forms of struggle hitherto practised. It is quite natural that the average human being should lose the enthusiasm for going to jail over and over again, for nothing. But the dynamic factor of mass discontent is there. It is steadily becoming broad and deep in consequence of the rapid deterioration of the economic condition of the lower middle class as well as the workers and peasants. Provided a suitable channel of expression, the popular discontent will swiftly transform into a powerful mass movement with a great political significance. The function of a new programme is to indicate the various ways and means for the canalization of mass energy towards a definite goal.

The proposed programme of action having been endorsed by local leaders in informal conferences, similar conferences should be held on provincial scale. Finally, the new programme should be brought before the A.I.C.C. The demand for the meeting of the A.I.C.C. backed by such a widespread rank and file movement will be irresistible. The technical question of illegality will be settled somehow. Since the new programme to be placed before the A.I.C.C. for its endorsement [provides for the] suspension of the Civil Disobedience, and is composed of a variety of mass activity within the limits of the established law, the Government is not likely to prohibit such a meeting of the A.I.C.C.

The issues will, thus, be joined at last. The meeting of the A.I.C.C. will be the scene for the fateful struggle for the leadership of the Congress. The future of the Congress will be determined by the outcome of that struggle. With determination, courage, and above all ideological clarity, the left wing, crystallized definitely out of the rank and file activity, is sure to win.

The crystallization of a left wing leadership, and its victory over the right wing as well as the orthodox Gandhian middle-roaders, are historically determined, being conditions for the further development of the struggle for freedom. The objective conditions for the national democratic revolution are maturing rapidly. The vast bulk of the population is sinking into the lowest depth of poverty and destitution. The conditions of their life are becoming unbearable. Colonial exploitation, aggravated by the world crisis of capitalism, renders any reform impossible. The coveted ideal of bourgeois nationalism, an ideal shared by the right wing of the Congress, the ideal of a capitalist development of India, is a utopia under given conditions. The measures demanded by the Indian capitalists, and partially conceded by imperialism (protective tariff, for example), instead of helping the capitalist development of India, positively harm it. The expansion of the internal market is the basic condition for the growth of capitalist production. Colonial exploitation places a limit to the purchasing power of the Indian masses. The present trade depression has reduced that limited capacity by half. Protective tariffs will further aggravate the situation.

So, there is absolutely no prospect for the least amelioration of the economic conditions of the Indian masses, including the lower middle classes. They must choose between pauperization, moral as well as physical degeneration, or revolution. If India is not to follow ancient Egypt, Babylon, etc. to extinction, she must break her chains of slavery—foreign exploitation, and its ally as well as protége, native reaction.

Revolution implies application of force for the liberation of the oppressed and exploited. The road to freedom from the degrading and demoralizing effects of colonial exploitation lies through an organized revolutionary struggle of the masses, which must eventually develop into the final stage of armed insurrection. The masses, however, cannot be drawn into a revolutionary political movement except through the struggle for enforcing their immediate economic demands. It is only in the course of this struggle that the political consciousness of the masses is awakened, and progressively stimulated into an irresistible will to power. The spirit of the Congress should be not that of sacrifice and suffering. It must be that of fight and conquest. The masses will become alive to the basic necessity for the conquest of political power only in consequence of the experience gained in the fight for the realization of smaller ideals, so vital for their daily life. Revolutionary politics must have a basis of economic realities.

Unless the Congress decidedly rejects the Gandhian ideology, and boldly stands on the road to the conquest of power and finds suitable ways and means for mobilizing the revolutionary energy of the masses in an unflagging struggle for the purpose, it will, under the influence of the right wing, degenerate into neo-constitutionalism, into the shameful policy of compromise with imperialism. That would mean its disintegration as a mass movement. That would mean a great setback to our struggle for freedom. That would mean a temporary check upon the development of the national democratic revolution, so essentially necessary for the progress and prosperity, indeed, for the very physical existence of the Indian people.

Should the rank and file or the leaders of the Congress permit the liquidation of the mass movement for the salvage of a bunch of reactionary notions, and in favour of futile reformist politics? Should the freedom of the Indian people be sacrificed for the cult of non-violence? Should the personal prestige of the Mahatma and his faithful followers be allowed to stand in the way of rank and file action? Should the Congress remain bound hand and foot by the prejudice of Civil Disobedience, and the blind faith in its false prophet, even after the prophet has himself thrown away his political cult all but in name? Should the interest and welfare of the masses be betrayed in the name of pragmatic policies of the Swarajists?

These are the questions that challenge the Congress today. The answer must be given not in words, but in deeds. It must take the convincing form of the rise of a new leadership with [a] left wing programme of revolutionary mass action. It must be given, clearly and unequivocally, the clarion call of a renewed struggle for freedom with the realistic and electrifying slogans: Land to the peasants; Bread to the workers, manual as well as mental. Concretely, these slogans will take different forms in different localities. But essentially, they summarize the immediate economic demands of the 90 per cent of the Indian people. By placing itself at the head of this new form of mass movement, will the Congress avoid the inglorious fate that threatens it today.

Notes

[1] Gandhi had prepared a draft statement on 2 April 1934, and circulated it among his close friends and followers. When, after the Delhi Conference, Dr Ansari, Dr B. C. Roy, and Bhulabhai Desai met him in a deputation at Patna, he revised and abridged the original draft, and then issued it in full support of the Delhi resolutions. SNR.

[2] The White Paper, based on the discussions at the Round Table Conference and containing proposals for the reform of the Indian Constitution, was published in March 1933. A joint committee of both the Houses of the British Parliament presented its report on the proposals in October 1934. On the basis of the White Paper and the Report, the Parliament passed the Government of India Act, 1935, with minor alterations. SNR.

[3] This refers to the suspension on 12 February 1922 of the earlier Civil Disobedience movement. On that day the Congress Working Committee meeting at Bardoli resolved that Congressmen should immediately stop all mass Satyagraha activities, and take to the Constructive Programme. SNR.

[4] Attacking the suspension of the Civil Disobedience movement by Gandhi on 8 May 1933, Vithalbhai J. Patel and Subhas Chandra Bose issued a joint statement from Vienna which was broadcast by Reuter. According to this statement.

> Mr Gandhi as a political leader has failed. The time has, therefore, come for a radical reorganization of the Congress on a new principle with a new method, for which a new leader is essential . . . If the Congress as a whole can undergo this transformation, it will be the best course. Failing that, a new party will have to be formed within the Congress, composed of radical elements. [*The Indian Annual Register*, 1933, Vol. I].

However, this joint attack from abroad had no more effect than Roy's critique from inside prison. SNR.

[5] When Mass Civil Disobedience was suspended, 'all who are able and willing were advised to offer individual Civil Disobedience. Under the orders of the Acting President all Congress organizations and war councils ceased to function' (Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress*, p. 944). However, 'the provincial leaders . . . did not carry out their pledges, except in a few cases. Those who were released from jails found themselves unable or unwilling to face another conviction.' (Ibid. p. 948). In the statement issued by Gandhi on 7 April 1934, he advised 'all Congressmen to suspend Civil resistance for Swaraj . . . They should leave it to me alone. It should be resumed by others in my lifetime only under my direction' (ibid., p. 955). After this, in the words of the official *History of the Congress*, 'the Civil Disobedience movement was switched off and the Council-entry programme was switched on' (ibid., p. 961). At its Bombay session (26–8 October 1934) the Congress Constitution was changed, and Gandhi formally 'retired' from that organization. SNR.

A LETTER TO THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL (1935)

Introductory editorial note

The Seventh Congress of the Communist International was held from 25 July to 20 August 1935. There was a break of seven years between this and the previous Congress (17 July to 1 Sept. 1928). Originally it had been planned to hold the Seventh Congress a year earlier, but this did not prove feasible for 'organizational reasons'. Since its foundation in March 1919, the International had held annual Congresses in the first four years (1919, 1920, 1921, 1922). The Fifth Congress was somewhat delayed (1924) when the Comintern statute was reaffirmed that in future not more than two years would be allowed to pass between two Congresses. After Lenin's death, however, as the struggle for succession to the leadership of the Party and the government in the Soviet Union became fierce, the Comintern receded to the background and there was a break of four years before the next Congress. Now it took seven years to hold another Congress, which eventually proved to be the last Congress of the Comintern. On 15 May 1943 the International was officially 'dissolved', and a Resolution to that effect, signed by the Presidium of the ECCI, was broadcast and published (*World News and Views*, XXII, 18, p. 217).

The Seventh Congress reversed the extreme left line of the Sixth Congress and adopted the strategy of 'the United Front of the working class against Fascism'. This change of line was brought about by several developments since the Sixth Congress. All Stalin's major rivals had by now been systematically eliminated from positions of authority and influence both inside the Soviet Union and in the Communist parties abroad, and Stalin no longer had any need to out-Trotsky Trotsky or outmanoeuvre Bukharin and his supporters. The so-called 'Third Period' of a rising revolutionary tide on a global scale that Stalin had proclaimed in 1928, had proved in fact to be altogether illusory. Depression had bred fascism, not revolution, and the aggressive attitude and behavior of the Communists towards Social democrats had hastened the victory of the Nazis in Germany. In that country Hitler had virtually wiped out the Communists (KPD), together with the Social Democrats (SPD), and was preparing for war. In almost every country, the Communists found themselves isolated from political and mass-movements, in consequence of the extremist line adopted at the Sixth Congress. In colonial countries particularly, this isolation was marked and disastrous since the Communists had been responding negatively to the rising tide of the nationalist movement.

The Seventh Congress unanimously resolved that 'in face of the towering menace of fascism to the working class . . . the main and immediate task of the international labour movement [is] to establish the united fighting front of the working class'. Fascism was at last recognized to be the principal enemy, and the building of a united anti-Fascist front was given topmost priority. This involved efforts to achieve trade union unity in both national and international spheres; joint action with the Social Democrats in the struggle against Fascism; rejection of former sectarianism and of 'the overestimation of the degree of revolutionization of the masses'; readiness to participate in 'bourgeois governments' committed to fighting Fascism; and in colonial countries, 'taking an active part in the mass anti-imperialist movements headed by the national reformists and striving to bring about joint action with the national–revolutionary and national–reformist organizations on the basis of a definite anti-imperialists platform' (*Protokoll, des VII Weltkongresses der kommunistischen Internationale*, Verlag Neuer Weg, Stuttgart, rpt. 1976).

The thrust of the United Front line in the context of colonies and 'semi-colonies' was explicated at the Seventh Congress by Wang Ming (Ch'en Shao-yu) who held up China and Brazil as models to be followed by the Communists in India. In China the Communists had forged a national front by accepting as allies national reformists and even militarists, and were seeking to unite under their leadership and within their own ranks the working class, peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, and national bourgeoisie. In Brazil the Communists were trying to develop a broad anti-imperialist coalition 'composed of various political blocs representing the four classes'. In India, Communists were instructed to cooperate with the Congress and its affiliated organizations, adopt a relatively moderate platform, pursue a United Front from above, but at the same time maintain their own separate organizational and political identity outside the Congress, and try to build from within the Congress a left wing under its hegemony which would eventually capture the leadership of the Congress (Wang Ming, *The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonial Countries*, New York, 1935; text of original report in *Inprecor*, XV, 11 Nov. 1935).

Thus the Seventh Congress, while highlighting the need for United Fronts from above, at the same time continued its old line of seeking ultimately to undermine all non-communist organizations that might be persuaded to form the United Front and of bringing their rank and file within the fold of the Communist party. Manuilsky made it clear that there was 'no deviation from Stalin's theory that fascism and social democracy are not antipodes but twins', that while forming United Fronts the 'Communists through their activities must prevent revival of social democracy'. The Resolution on Fascism, Working-class Unity, and the Tasks of the Comintern that was adopted at the Congress urged 'a most energetic struggle to root out all vestiges of sectarianism', but at the same time warned against any 'weakening [of] the criticism of social democracy as the ideology and practice of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie', 'against belittling the role of the party and against the slightest vacillation at the moment of decisive action'. (*Seventh World Congress of the Communist International: Resolutions and Decisions*, Moscow, 1935).

Roy wrote his letter several months before the Seventh Congress, and it was duly smuggled out of jail and forwarded by Tayab Shaikh through his Berlin contacts to Moscow. From behind bars Roy had been trying to follow developments in India and abroad, and particularly the signs of shifts in the Comintern line in the early thirties. At the twelfth ECCI Plenum (Sept. 1932), Roy had been virulently attacked as the 'left national–reformist Menshevik renegade', but his arrest had been noted, and explained by Magyar as 'demonstrating the desire of the British authorities to provoke the Indian masses to come out on to the streets so that they could then be shot down with machine-guns, artillery and aeroplanes' (Jane Degres, *Documents*, Vol. III, p. 221). Although Roy was in jail, his followers had gained control of the former Communist unions. In November 1933 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China addressed an 'Open Letter to the Indian Communists' (published in *Inprecor* XIII, 24 Nov. 1933) strongly criticizing the latter as 'sectarian', blamed them for their 'practice of self-isolation from workers' meetings', and advised them to join 'the mass trade unions which are under the influence of the reformists'. In December the Communist Party of India was reconstituted, and early in 1934 the 'Royists' and the 'official' communists agreed to call together a general strike in the Indian textile industry which was undergoing a severe crisis. The strike took place in April and, according to official reports, about 70,000 workers participated in it (Horace Williamson, *India and Communism*, rpt. 1976, p. 190). The communists wanted to convert it into a general strike covering all industries throughout India—a proposal that was altogether unrealistic and one opposed by the Royists. By the end of May most of the communist leaders were arrested and the strike soon collapsed. In July the CPI was declared illegal together with the Red TUC.

Meanwhile in Europe, the extermination of both social Democrats and Communists by the Nazis in Germany and the growing threat of fascist expansion demanded re-examination and, if necessary, reversal of the Sixth Congress strategy. In July 1934 the Communist and the Socialist Parties of France signed an agreement on joint struggle against Fascism and war, and on refraining from attacking one another for the duration of joint action. (G. Walter, *Histoire du Parti Communiste Française*, Paris, 1948). As preparations proceeded for the Seventh Comintern Congress, United Front proposals following the French model were made by the Communist Parties of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Spain, and Switzerland.

Although Roy had been expelled by the Comintern, at the time he wrote this letter he was still very much a Marxist. Indeed, he saw himself as a more genuine communist than those officially recognized as such. In view of the indications he received of the forthcoming changes in the Comintern's policy, he believed that if the Comintern leadership were correctly advised about the reality of the Indian situation, it would instruct its Indian section to follow the strategy he and the Royists had been advocating over the past several years. He also hoped that since the Comintern's new line would be virtually the same as his own, he would be readmitted to the Comintern and that the Royists and the official Communists would then constitute the United Communist Party of India working under the guidance of the CI. He wrote to his friends in the Communist Opposition abroad advising them to seek reconciliation with the Comintern, and to his followers in India to make every effort to achieve unity (letter of 12 March 1935, in M. N. Roy Archives, New Delhi). However, Roy's letter to the Comintern was not acknowledged, his appeal for reinstatement was ignored, and again in the Seventh Congress, derogatory reference was made to 'the theory of the Social Democrats and the renegades—Roy and others—about 'decolonization' [which] has been . . . completely shattered' (Wang Ming, op. cit., p. 11).

Veteran communist though he was, Roy did not seem to have reckoned with the fact that the first and necessary condition to be fulfilled before any readmission could be at all considered was for the applicant to totally abase himself before the Party apparatchiki, admit all kinds of false charges against him, beg humbly for absolution, and wait patiently till his self-degradation was complete. To assert, even to imply, that his position had been correct all along and that the wise men in Moscow were at last coming round to his position, was the surest way of damning himself. Roy, of course, received no reply but, according to one account, some time after his release from jail, Roy was visited by a representative of the CPI (probably Ajoy Ghosh) who asked him to follow the communist code and make an application to the local cell of the Party that might then be processed and forwarded in due course. The founder of the emigré CPI at Tashkent, and for eight years top Asian theorist of the Comintern, was struck dumb by the sheer impudence of the neophyte. He took him by the collar of his shirt and pushed him out of his makeshift office (Interview with Tayab Shaikh).

The 'Letter' briefly outlines all the principal concepts and issues that occupied Roy during the thirties—the differentiation between the Congress as a multi-class mass movement and its anachronistic leadership, the historic need and possibility of evolving an 'alternative radical democratic leadership', the relative weakness of the Indian proletariat and the role of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia, the transformation of local Congress Committees into revolutionary Peoples Committees, the demand for a Constituent Assembly, and the programme of a democratic revolution under the banner of Jacobinism. For more detailed presentation of these concepts and issues readers are referred to his two books, *Our Task* (1932) and *The Manifesto* (1935), both included in this volume.

SNR.

A Letter to the Communist International*

We deeply deplore the disunity among the proletarian revolutionaries in this country. We are numerically weak, but are called upon to perform a tremendous task under very difficult and delicate conditions. A strong (qualitatively), well-organized, clearsighted, cleverly led Communist Party is the crying need of the situation of this country. Elements to go into the rise of such a party are there, still largely in the form of raw material. Nevertheless, even today there is no such party. The Communist Party of India is a small sect, isolated from the political life of the country.[1] As such, it is utterly unable to influence the situation. This woeful position is the result of the mistaken tactical line followed ever since 1929.

Keenly conscious of the magnitude of the task confronting the Indian proletariat, also of the numerical weakness of the revolutionary vanguard of our class, we are very eager to close our thin ranks into a United Communist Party so that, under your guidance, we shall be able to play creditably our difficult role in the Indian revolution. But the manifest futility and harmfulness of the policy pursued by the comrades acting on your authority, made it impossible for us to join the C. P. of India. Unity is highly desirable; it is urgently needed; we are eager to realize it. But there is no use uniting on a wrong line; and the C. P. of India stubbornly sticks to the line which has been proved by experience to be not only wrong but harmful.[2] By joining the C. P. as it is today, we would also be isolated from the masses; we would also be deprived of the possibilities of acquiring a position of decisive importance; we would also be unable to swell the ranks of the proletarian revolutionaries with recruits from the politically active workers, peasants, and declassed intellectuals, who even today follow the National Congress.

All out efforts to persuade the C. P. to change its policy, in the light of lessons learnt from bitter experience, so that all proletarian revolutionaries could get together in a united party, have failed. If some of our comrades would not learn from their own experience, would stubbornly blind themselves from the realities of the situation, would prefer splendid isolation to fruitful mass activity, we should not stultify ourselves by going their mistaken way. That is not the way for the rise of a C. P. in this country a party that, in the near future, could be an effective factor in the political life of the country; could bid for the leadership of the oppressed and exploited masses, not in mere words but in convincing deeds; could raise the anti-imperialist struggle to a higher level; could decisively influence the development and perspective of the Indian revolution. The dreary and distressing record of the C. P. ever since 1929 definitely proves that it has run into a blind alley. Revolutionary conscience, regard for reality, devotion for the cause for communism, compel us to strike out a new path.

---

* Written in 1935, before the VII World Congress, the resolution of which must have been influenced by the facts reported in the document. M. N. R.

The C. P. of India lives only on your authority. Take away this support and the group will disintegrate. It has no root in the soil. Your support is secured by magnified reports of activities and influence.[3] The reports make a wrong impression upon you, and prevent you from realizing the incorrectness of the policy inaugurated by the Sixth World Congress. We are sure that, provided with a correct picture of the situation, and informed of the negative consequence of the policy pursued ever since 1929, you will modify your opinion about the character and perspective of the Indian revolution, and direct your Indian Section to follow henceforth a different course. Therefore, we are giving you in this letter a general idea of the situation as it really is, hoping that it will be given dispassionate consideration with the object of formulating a realistic policy to be pursued by all the proletarian revolutionaries in this country.

We draw your attention to the following outstanding facts of the situation in this country:

1. The immaturity of the proletariat. It is not only weak numerically; it is formed but partially as a class. The strikes are rather the results of elementary revolt against intolerable conditions of daily life than symptoms of revolutionary class consciousness.[4] Even among workers, more or less under Communist leadership, as for example, in Bombay cotton mills, there are very few who grasp the rudimentary ideas of class struggle, and are consciously inclined towards Communism. The working class as a whole is socially immature, politically backward, organizationally weak.

2. Only a very small fraction of the industrial workers (hardly 10 per cent) is organized. A very small section of organized workers is under the Communist influence. Practically all the big trade unions (of the Railway workers, for example) are under reformist leadership. The dominating political tendency is nationalist, most of the prominent Trade Union leaders being Congressmen. 'The Red T. U. C., is a paper organization. Its membership is limited to the C. P., its sympathizers and supporters; that is to say, to a couple of hundred people. Not one single important trade union is affiliated to it. The original T. U. Congress also is a weak body embracing a minority of the organized workers. The majority are in the Trade Union Federation.

3. The peasant masses are unaffected by any other political propaganda

than that of the National Congress. The countryside is the scene of seething discontent, aggravated by the current agrarian crisis. But there is no symptom of any widespread revolutionary awakening. The political consciousness of the peasantry is represented by the adoration for Gandhi, and confidence in the National Congress as their champion. Communist propaganda finds no response in the villages. Communist agitators have been driven out of the villages for abusing Gandhi and the National Congress. The political notion of the rural population, indeed also of the urban masses, is monarchistic. They can hardly think of the Government of a country without a king.

4. The petty bourgeois intelligentsia is the most active political element. Practically all the recruits for the Communist movement so far have come from that class. But nationalist preoccupations are generally very powerful. Political activity of the petty bourgeois intellectual takes place either in the National Congress or in the terrorist movement. This latter has of late shown signs of development in the direction of the Socialist Revolutionary Party of Russia.[5] It is isolated from the masses; has no understanding of or regard for the social problems; is fanatically nationalistic in cultural questions. In short, Fascist tendency is to be discerned in the terrorist movement. At the same time there is a process of radicalization, socially. This process may advance towards Communism. The petty-bourgeois intellectuals in the National Congress are more or less in touch with the masses. They are getting more and more concerned with social problems, in a rather reformist, sentimental, humanitarian sense than with a consciously revolutionary purpose. This tendency has lately crystallized in the so-called Congress Socialist Party.[6] There is a process of radicalization in the democratic *bourgeois revolutionary* sense. But the process is retarded by the prevalence of the reactionary utopian Gandhiist ideology. The radically inclined petty-bourgeois intellectuals are without a leadership. Yet they are not ready to accept it from the proletariat *directly*. Nor is the proletariat as a class in a position to offer such leadership as yet.

5. The National Congress offers the rallying ground to the oppressed and exploited classes in their struggle against imperialism. It commands the confidence of the masses. It is not a homogeneous political party. It is a movement which expresses the highest degree of political consciousness of the masses. The leadership of the Congress is not the Congress. There is objective contradiction between the present leadership, which is under the influence of the middle bourgeoisie, and the Congress as a movement. There is social basis for an alternative radical democratic leadership to replace the present outfit. The rise of such a leadership is necessary for the next stage of the revolution.

6. It is an illusion to think that the workers and peasants are dissatisfied with the Congress. No mass movement can be organized in opposition

to the Congress. Those making such attempts are sure to be isolated from the masses, as has been the experience of the C. P. of India. The Congress is not disintegrating, although it is involved in a crisis. The absence of an organized left wing has enabled the right-wingers to capture the leadership. If the position of the right is not challenged by an alternative radical democratic leadership, the entire nationalist mass movement will come under the reactionary influence of the bourgeois. Then the Congress would become a bourgeois nationalist party. The result of such an eventuality will be disastrous. The mass movement will be decomposed. The Congress will disintegrate, but there will be no new mass organization to take its place.

7. Owing to its broad class basis, the National Congress can be transformed into an instrument of revolutionary (democratic) struggle. The petty bourgeois intelligentsia, in collaboration with the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat, can provide the necessary alternative leadership. The next stages of the Indian revolution must develop under that type of leadership—under the hegemony (not leadership) of the proletariat. No other type of revolutionary leadership can possibly rise out of the background of the social composition of the forces of revolution, of the given relation of classes. To talk of an independent proletarian leadership is to indulge in a vain fantasy. The proletariat is not yet able to play that role. To begin with, it must develop as a class, and that is conditional upon the accomplishment of the basic task of the belated bourgeois revolution, and the rapid industrialization of the country under *democratic dictatorship*. The revolutionary leadership needed today must raise the banner not of Communism, but of Jacobinism.[7] We must remember Lenin's remarks on introducing the New Economic Policy: there can be no proletarian dictatorship without the proletariat; let us first create the proletariat.[8] Under the present world conditions, and thanks to the impossibility of solving India's economic problems (particularly the agrarian problem) on the bas is of capitalist production, Jacobinism cannot degenerate into bourgeois democracy. Democratic dictatorship is the road to Socialism in India.

8. The National Congress, with its broad social basis and tremendous influence upon the masses, is the typical instrument created by peculiar conditions under which the anti-imperialist struggle has to take place—an instrument admirably suited for the purpose of opening up the road to democratic dictatorship.

9. The National Congress with its widespread network of a skeleton organization, given revolutionary democratic dictatorship—(and the objective conditions for the rise of such a leadership are ripening)—can serve as the instrument in the struggle for the capture of power by the oppressed and exploited masses, and eventually be converted into the organ of democratic power of the revolutionary state.

10. Local Congress Committees in a revolutionary crisis can function as instruments of mass uprisings and become the basic units of the revolutionary state. They render the establishment of the Soviet State a matter of practical possibility.

The activities of the C. P. of India disregarded all these realities and possibilities of the situation. The blunders are not merely tactical. A radically wrong, un-Marxian theory of revolution distorts the vision of the comrades who operate in this country on your authority, and are unfortunately backed up by you. They represent the spirit of Blanquism.[9] They wish to make a revolution to order. They do not know that the character and perspective of a revolution are determined by the conditions under which it takes place, and that the tactical policy of the revolutionary party should be guided by the character and perspective of the revolution.

We shall point out only the flagrant mistakes committed by the C. P. of India, and the harmful effects of these mistakes not only upon the development of the revolutionary movement, but also upon the growth of the C. P. itself:

1. Faulty analysis of the forces of revolution. The consequent failure to appreciate correctly the social composition of those forces. Wrong notion about the character and perspective of the Indian revolution in the earlier stages. Disregard for the fact that the task of the bourgeois democratic revolution is still to be accomplished in this country, and that owing to its immaturity, the proletariat is not in a position to do that single-handed, without the collaboration of the peasantry and the semi-proletarianized urban petty bourgeoisie. The inability to realize that this collaboration cannot take place on the terms dictated by the proletariat, but only on the platform of revolutionary democratic freedom. In short, the C. P. of India forgot, or never learnt, one of the fundamental lessons of Marxism derived form the history of class struggle: namely, that a revolutionary class creates the conditions for its own emancipation by liberating the entire society from the established form of class domination. The liberation of the Indian society from foreign imperialism and the native reaction will create conditions for the emancipation of the Indian proletariat. The immediate task of the proletariat is to work for that emancipation. The proletariat will accomplish this task by rallying the oppressed and the exploited masses in this struggle for the realization of the programme of democratic national revolution. The C. P. of India has failed to lead the proletariat towards the accomplishment of this task.

2. Disregard of the nationalist character of the revolution. Owing to this failure, the C. P. of India underestimated the influence of Gandhi and the usefulness of the national Congress as an instrument in the struggle against imperialism. This mistake isolated the C. P. from the Nationalist masses, including not only the peasantry and the urban petty

bourgeoisie, but the proletariat itself. The isolation from the forces of revolution seriously obstructed the growth of the C. P., which consequently remained a small sect.

3. To look upon the National Congress as the political party of the bourgeoisie, instead of appreciating it—as it really is—as a movement embracing a variety of classes and sub-classes. From this wrong estimation of the Congress resulted the failure to distinguish between the objectively revolutionary rank and file, and the subjectively anti-revolutionary leadership of the Congress. Another result was the highly reprehensible policy of attacking the left wing as well as the right wing. The way to the liberation of the Congress from the bourgeois influence and its consequent conversion into a militant mass organization, is the overthrow of the Gandhist leadership and its replacement by a radical democratic leadership. Under the dangerous illusion that the nationalist masses can be brought under proletarian leadership, and the anti-imperialist struggle developed as a part of the proletarian revolution, the C. P. refuses to foment the rise of the radical petty bourgeois left wing inside the National Congress, and to help it in the struggle against the bourgeois-Gandhist right wing. The C. P. started on this grievously mistaken path in 1928 when the right wing leadership of the National Congress was seriously menaced by the left wing. Instead of rallying the peasants and workers in support of the left wing, disregarding for the moment the antiquity of its social programme, the C. P. declared it to be the greater danger, and foolishly denounced it as the veiled agent of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and reactionary Gandhism. That foolish policy started from the estimation of the National Congress as the party of the bourgeoisie. It has been stubbornly pushed ever since, and has contributed considerably to the present debacle of the anti-imperialist struggle. In the absence of mass pressure, exerted under the influence of the C. P., the petty bourgeois left wing was easily placated by the right wing leaders who thus retained the control of the Congress machinery. Objectively revolutionary forces remained under non-revolutionary leadership. Their will to fight was not developed. Their field of activity was restricted by the Gandhist tactics of passive resistance which was bound to end in capitulation.

4. The policy of the C. P., pursued ever since 1928, of standing outside the National Congress, of denouncing it as a counter-revolutionary body, meant voluntary withdrawal of the proletarian vanguard from the field of its operation. Had it stood by its post in the midst of the forces of revolution, it could have extended its influence over them, won their confidence by virtue of participating in the same struggle with them, and gradually guided them out of the paralysing control of the non-revolutionary leaders. But that was a difficult road to travel. The C. P. of India, suffering from the infantile malady of ultra-leftism, chose the

easy line of least resistance. It was simple to abuse all but the small band of youthful Communists as counter-revolutionaries, and talk of rallying the masses in an anti-imperialist struggle under independent proletarian leadership, outside the National Congress. The masses, however, refused to rally under the new flag, and steadfastly followed Gandhi under the banner of the National Congress. Thanks to the foolishness of abusing popular left wing leaders, the C. P. alienated the sympathy of even the most radical elements in the National Congress, from which source, under the given conditions of India, the leading cadre of the working-class party must be recruited. The responsibility of the defeat of the anti-imperialist movement of India must be shared by the C. P., because it would not pursue the policy advocated by its pioneers and practised previously with satisfactory result—a policy that might have precluded the defeat by strengthening the movement from inside—through a process of class differentiation resulting, from the experience gained in actual struggle; through a democratization of the leadership; through a radicalization of the programme under the pressure of the masses; through the adoption of more effective forms of militant mass struggle.

5. The grievous mistake of the C. P. of India has been the idealization of the proletariat. Disregarding all the realities, the C. P. entertained the fantastic idea that the revolutionary class-consciousness of the Indian proletariat has attained a high degree of development, and consequently it is fit to assume the leadership of the revolution even in the present bourgeois democratic stage. The deluded comrades are simply carried away by their overenthusiasm, and presumably have been misleading you with grossly overdrawn pictures of the revolutionary activity of the proletariat. As a matter of fact, notwithstanding its potential importance, at present, the proletariat plays a minor role in the scheme of Indian politics; and whatever role it plays, is still heavily coloured with the nationalist sentiment.

6. The overestimation of the actual significance of the proletariat leads to the corresponding undervaluation of the importance of other elements involved in the revolution, no less fundamentally than the proletariat. This disproportionate view of the relation of classes involved in the revolution does not permit the C. P. to realize the urgent necessity of the alliance of the revolutionary classes in the struggle for democratic national freedom. Yet the proletariat will eventually assume the leadership of the revolution on the strength of the hegemony that it will exercise in this struggle, and the initiative in the formation of the historically necessary revolutionary alliance will place it in the position to exercise the hegemony in the struggle. No use advocating this alliance in word as C. P. has been lately doing, while the C. P. stands outside the alliance already formed in the National Congress, and actually declared its determination to break it up. The C. P. believes that all it has got to

do is to hold high the standard of revolution dyed in pure red, and the oppressed and exploited classes will automatically flock under it. Experience has proved the futility of this method. Yet the C. P. would not learn. It is for you, comrades, to remind these ultra-left enthusiasts of Lenin's famous injunction: that the revolutionary party must be where the masses are. And it is time that all concerned with the revolutionary movement in this country realize the palpable fact that the national Congress is the rallying ground of the masses.

The exaggerated notion about the revolutionary class-consciousness of the revolutionary proletariat has induced the C. P. of India to pursue a suicidal policy as regards the organization of the working class. Trade unions under its control are not mass organizations, because the programme of the party is imposed on them. As a matter of fact, the C. P. does not seem to know the difference between the political party of the proletariat and the trade union. Thanks to this deplorable ignorance it split the T. U. Congress. Owing to its disregard for the fact that the trade union has a specific function, it failed to retain the big unions in the T. U. Congress when it came under its control. After the split (at Nagpur in 1929), during the brief period when the T. U. C. was completely under the control of the Communists, there was a conspicuous absence of any mass activity, Instead of developing the T. U. C. into a powerful mass organization, the Communists, thanks to this ultra-leftism, drove all the big unions out. At the same time, under Communist leadership, the T. U. C. passed resolutions calling for a political general strike. The result was the decomposition of the T. U. C., and the rise of the reformist Trade Union Federation controlling a majority of the organized workers. When Communists, who disagreed with this suicidal policy, tried to reconstruct the T. U. C., the C. P. again split that depleted body because it would not follow the ruinous policy any longer. The C. P., under the name of the Red T. U. C., fiercely opposed our efforts, supported by a number of left wing T. U. leaders, to establish unity in the labour movement on the platform of the struggle for enforcing a series of partial demands for the workers. Splitting tactics have isolated the C.P. from the ranks of the organized workers. Even the Girni Kamgar Union of Bombay, as far back as 1929, repudiated Communist leadership after this had all but destroyed the once-powerful organization. Its membership was down to a mere few hundreds. On their failing to get re-elected to the offices of the union, the Communists left the union, and started a rival organization which has never become a trade union with any mass support. We have reconstructed the Girni Kamgar Union and re-established the Communist influence over it.[10] But the C. P. fights constantly this popular organization of Bombay textile workers and makes repeated efforts to split it again.

We earnestly believe that you will easily realize the harmfulness of these mistakes committed in this country on your authority, and rectify them without delay. These mistakes have prevented the anit-imperialist struggle from being reinforced by the influence of the C. I., as was the case in other colonial countries, and also in this, previously. These mistakes are positively injurious to the cause of Communism and proletarian world revolution, because they decisively obstructed the growth of the C. P., and the revolutionary activity of the working class. Further development of the anti-imperialist struggle, under the banner of the democratic freedom, is conditional upon the appearance of a revolutionary democratic leadership in the National Congress; and this, in its turn, can rise only on the foundation of a fighting alliance of the oppressed and exploited classes, formed on the initiative of the C. P., under the hegemony of the proletariat. Obviously the C. P. shall not be able to rise up to its task before it can function as an active factor in the political life of this country, closely connected with the masses, winning their confidence progressively by virtue of participating in their struggles. And to be an effective political factor, the C. P. must abandon the course it has been following since 1928—a course that has led to isolation and the consequent political stultification.

The document* attached herewith sets forth what, in our opinion, is the correct Communist policy under the given conditions of this country. It is formulated on the basis of a Marxist analysis of the situation, and realistic appreciation of the available forces of revolution.

A revolutionary party must operate with the forces available. The magnification of the potentiality of the available forces will only lead us to grief. Experience has borne out the correctness of the policy and programme of action advocated by us. Working under great difficulties, the most regrettable of them being the vicious attack by the C. P., we have made satisfactory progress in a short time. It is exclusively through our efforts that the right-wing leaders of the Congress have been forced to endorse the demand for the Constituent Assembly—a demand that challenges the authority of the British Parliament, and thus raises the anti-imperialist struggle to a higher stage which must eventually culminate into armed insurrection.[12] The opposition of the C. P. was one of the factors that delayed our success in this respect. When, in 1931, we sought to rally the Congress rank and field against the 'Peace Pact' of Gandhi and his participation in the Round Table Conference, with the slogan of the Constituent Assembly, the C. P. joined forces with the politically backward Gandhists in the opposition. We are painfully aware of the fact that you also disapproved of the slogan; but today, in view of your changed attitude as regards the defence of the parliamentary democratic freedom of Europe, you should reconsider your position on the question of the propriety of the Communists supporting the demand for a Constituent Assembly in this country. The crux of the question is the character and perspective of the Indian revolution. Reports deeply coloured with subjectivism, written by people unable to make a Marxian analysis of the given relation of the classes, and reluctant to recognize realities—such misleading reports persuaded you to take a wrong view of the character and perspective of the Indian revolution. Acquaintance with the facts as they are, will convince you that the character of the Indian revolution in the next stages will necessarily be bourgeois democratic; that the conditions in which the task of the bourgeois revolution may be accomplished under proletarian dictatorship are not ripe in this country. It is foolish romanticism to aim at proletarian dictatorship in the near future in this country; and it may not be an indispensable necessity later on. For the time being, a democratic revolution must develop with slogans appropriate for a struggle of that nature. The perspective is the perspective of democratic dictatorship.

---

* A comprehensive programme for a C. P. in India. It was subsequently published as 'Our Task'.[11]

We beseech you to give serious and dispassionate consideration to the facts indicated, and arrive at your own conclusions. We are sure that it will be a correct conclusion. Marxist principles, Leninist realism, and revolutionary experience will enable you to realize the correctness of our position, and the necessity of changing accordingly the policy pursued by the C. P. of India. Such a decision on your part will render great assistance to the forces of revolution in the country. It will instantly unite the vanguard of these forces into a single organization, free of the deficiencies that have hitherto hindered its development into an effectively functioning political party. We confidently hope that you will not fail to take such measures as will enable all the Communists in this country to stand together under the banner of the C. I., and perform their delicate and difficult task under your guidance.

Notes

[1] In 1934 the official CPI had a total membership of 150 (H. Williamson, *India and Communism*). In July 1934 it was declared illegal and the ban was not lifted till 1942 when, under Moscow's instruction the Party formally came out in support of the war and extended its full cooperation to the government. SNR.

[2] In the early part of 1934 Roy's followers and the official communists did form a United Front and work together to organize a strike in the Indian textile industry in Bombay, but they soon parted company when the Roy group opposed the CPI proposal to convert it to a general all-India, all-industries strike. (Government of India Home Department (Intelligence Bureau), 1935, 1935, p. 214). SNR.

[3] At the time when the CPI was in complete disarray and struggling for survival, Pavel Mif reported to the Institute of World Economy and World Politics that the Communist Party of India 'plays a stronger role everyday' (*Colonial Problems*, Collected Vol. 3–4, Moscow, 1935, p. 75). SNR.

[4] During 1934 there were '159 strikes, involving 220, 808 workers, and causing a loss of 4,755,559 mandays'. (P.S. Gupta *A Short History of the All-India Trade Union Congress*, New Delhi, 1980, p 237). The strikes invariably failed due to poor organization and leadership, and political divisions of the trade union movement. The movement had split into three rival organizations: the AITUC, the National Trade Union Federation (1929), and the Red Trade Union Congress (1931). At the Tenth session of the AITUC (1929), its Executive Council accepted the credentials of 54 unions with a total membership of 189, 436. After the first split this was reduced to 21 unions with 92, 797 members. In 1931 twelve communist-controlled trade unions broke away and formed the Red TUC. Unity efforts continued throughout the thirties, and in April 1935 the Red TUC dissolved itself and re-merged with the AITUC, but NTUF continued to maintain its separate identity and organization. V. B. Karnik, *Inidan Trade Unions*, Bombay, 1966; S. D. Punekar, *Trade Unionism in India*, Bombay, 1948. SNR.

[5] The party of Socialist Revolutionaries was formed in Russia in 1901 by the older *Zemlia i Volia* populists in conjunction with younger men with a programme of distribution of all the land to the peasants for their use. The party enjoyed peasant support and was active in the Soviets. In June 1917, at the first All-Russian Congress of Soviets, 'out of its 822 delegates with voting rights, the Socialist Revolutionaries accounted for 285, the Mensheviks for 248 and the Bolsheviks for 105' (E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, vol. I, Pelican, 1973, p. 100). Even after the Bolsheviks had captured power, the elections to the Constituent Assembly in December 1917 gave the Socialist Revolutionaries a comfortable majority—410 in all, out of a total of 707 elected members. The Bolsheviks could secure only 175 seats. (Carr, ibid., p. 120). On 19 January 1918, the Constituent Assembly was abolished by a decree of the Bolshevik government. The Socialist Revolutionaries came under systematic persecution, and by 1922 they were virtually 'liquidated'. (L. Schapiro, *The Origin of the Communist Autocracy*, London, 1955). SNR.

[6] The first All-India Socialist Conference was held at Patna on 17 May 1934, which was followed by a second conference at Bombay in October 1934 where the Constitution, Programme, and Platform of the Congress Socialist Party were formally adopted. The CSP was part of the Indian National Congress, but it was opposed to the decisions taken by the All-India Congress Committee in May 1934 to suspend Civil Disobedience and endorse the proposal of the Swarajya Party to contest the forthcoming elections to the Central Legislative Assembly. (*Congress Socialist Party: Constitution Programmes and Resolutions*, 1934; Narendra Deva, *Socialism and the National Revolution*, Bombay, 1946; P. L. Lakhanpal, *History of the Congress Socialist Party*, Lahore, 1946.) SNR.

[7] The Jacobins were a leading political group spearheading the French Revolution during its radical republican phase. Based in Paris, it created a network of organizations in provincial towns and in numerous villages. The Jacobins captured the convention (June 1793) after expelling the somewhat more moderate group, the Girondins, and used the Committee of Public Safety to eliminate all rivals and opponents and to establish the machinery of a strongly centralized government. Jacobinism combined ardent patriotism with a programme of political and economic radicalism. Roberspierre, the pre-eminent Jacobin, wanted to establish a Republic of Virtue. The Jacobins were in absolute power from June 1793 to July 1794. In July Robespierre was arrested and summarily executed and the Jacobin phase of the French revolution was over (Crane Brinton, *A Decade of Revolution 1789–99*, New York, 1934). Both Lenin and Roy saw in the Jacobins models of revolutionary leadership that suited societies waiting for the accomplishment of a bourgeois–democratic revolution (*see* M. N. Roy, 'Twentieth Century Jacobinism', in *Scientific Politics*, Dehra Dun, 1942 pp. 120–52). SNR.

[8] The New Economic Policy was introduced in February 1921. As Lenin explained at the Tenth Congress of the Party, 'Immediate transition to socialism was possible only in countries of developed capitalism', but in Russia 'there was still a minority of workers in industry and a vast majority of small cultivators. Only an agreement with the peasantry

can save the socialist revolution in Russia until the revolution has occurred in other countries.' 'There is much that can be and must be learned from the capitalists.' Lenin, *Sochineniya*, Vol. 26, quoted by E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, Vol. 2, pp. 275–8. SNR.

[9] Louis Auguste Blanqui (1805–81) after whom the word Blanquism was coined, was a French revolutionary who advocated the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, but believed that revolution would be brought about by a small determined group of revolutionaries seizing state power in the name of the proletariat. He attempted a coup in 1839 and participated in the revolution of 1848. Throughout his life he participated in a succession of revolutionary organizations, and spent more than thirty years in prison. About half of the leaders of the short-lived Paris commune of 1871 were Blanquists. His writings were posthumously collected and published in a volume entitled *Critique Sociale*.

For Lenin, 'Blanquism' was a form of 'infantile disorder', but Leninism itself was attacked by Rosa Luxemburg as a 'Blanquist distortion of Marxism' (Rosa Luxemburg, 'Organisationsfragen der russischen Sozialdemokratie', *Der Neuw Zeit*, Vol. 22, Stuttgart, 1904, bk 1, pp. 484–92; 529–35). SNR.

[10] Roy's followers joined the Congress Labour Committee and won workers' support by 'championing their concrete demands for higher wages, increased benefits and improved working conditions'. The Royists captured the Girni Kamgar Union which had been a communist stronghold, and in October 1930, the GKU's communist Secretary S. V. Despande was expelled by a resolution of the Union. In 1931 Roy's lieutenant Tayab Shaikh became secretary of the Bombay branch of the AITUC. In July 1931, the AITUC executive Committee, under the Presidentship of Subhas Chandra Bose, gave recognition to the Royists as representing the GKU; in protest the communists broke up the conference and formed a separate Red Trade Union Congress of their own. In the reconstituted AITUC, the Royists Tayab Shaikh and J. N. Mitra were elected respectively as Secretary and Vice-President. The General Secretary Mukunda Lal Sarkar was also at this time a follower of M. N. Roy. S. D. Puneker, *Trade Unionism in India*; P. S. Gupta, *A Short History of AITUC*. SNR.

[11] The text of *Our Task in India* is included in this volume. SNR.

[12] As early as 1927 Roy's idea of 'a national Constituent Assembly guaranteeing complete national independence and democratization of national life in every respect' had been echoed in the 'Manifestro of the Workers' and Peasants' Party' that had been distributed at the Madras session of the Congress. But the idea was rejected by the C. I. in 1928. See *Selected Works of M. N. Roy, Vol. III*, pp. 145–8; 385–7. SNR.

THE MANIFESTO OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY OF THE INDIAN WORKING CLASS (THE COMMUNIST PARTY)

(1935)

This Manifesto with a forwarding letter was submitted to the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International held at Moscow in 1935.

I The development of anti-imperialist struggle
II The forces of National Revolution
III The National Congress and the anti-imperialist struggle
IV The theory and practice of Gandhism
V The Congress Socialist Party
VI The working class and the democratic national revolution
VII What do we want? Our immediate programme
VIII Our differences
IX Our programme of action
X On the road to socialism

Introductory editorial note

In the introductory editorial note to *Our Task in India* included in an earlier section of this volume I have described in some detail how, after Roy's arrest, his followers in India or the 'Royists' worked as groups in Bombay and Calcutta, and how their principal achievement during the early thirties lay in organizing sections of the working class and capturing the leadership of some of the major trade unions from the 'official' communists. Their other principal activity was to publish and distribute various articles, pamphlets, and books written by Roy in jail and clandestinely smuggled out with the assistance of other prisoners, even warders and subordinate prison officials. The principal organizer of these early Royist groups was Tayab Shaikh who moved from Bombay, where he was relatively well known, to Calcutta where he used various aliases and cover addresses to avoid police surveillance and arrest. According to a 'Brief Note dated 8th May 1935 on the present position of the Communist Movement in India' from the Intelligence Bureau, 'Indeed, during this period the stage may be said to have been occupied less by the "official" communist parties than by a powerful opposition group led by the ex-comintern leader, M. N. Roy' (Home/Pol/F.7/6 Sr. No.103).

Under Roy's instruction the Royists were to undertake a twofold task: openly and effectively participate in the mainstream of national political activities and mass movement, propagating their programmes and point of view; and retain at the same time their organizational identity and ideological integrity as the 'true' Communist Party of India as distinct from the 'official' party that claimed the recognition and support of the Communist International. For the former they needed a broad-based legal organization that, at least in theory, would include the three potentially revolutionary classes—the proletariat, peasantry, and petty bourgeoisie. For the latter, they had to form a close-knit secret group, based more or less on the Leninist model. The first purpose was met by the openly formed Committee of Action for Independence of India, the members of which worked in the Congress; for a while it adopted the name League of Indian Independence. Not all its members were Royists. The secret close-knit organization was named Revolutionary Working Class Party comprising exclusively of trusted Royists, and it published in 1932 Roy's proposed programme under the title *Our Task in India*.

Initially the largest and most active unit of the RWCP was in Calcutta where it had been organized by Tayab Shaikh; the other important group was in Bombay. The RWCP recognized that 'the formation of Congress left wing into a well-disciplined and functioning party is the correct approach to the Congress rank and file by the cadre of convinced

Marxists' (Shetty, a follower of Roy, in *Mahratha*, 1 October 1933). Units of RWCP came to be formed in the early thirties at Poona, Ahmedabad, Baroda, Benaras, Kanpur, Howrah, and some places in Bihar and Orissa, besides Calcutta and Bombay. In 1934, under Roy's instruction from jail, representatives of these units met and formed the Revolutionary Party of the Indian Working Class (RPIWC) that claimed to be the real 'Communist Party of India'. Roy was opposed to naming it 'Communist Party Opposition', as had been done by his friends, the Brandlerites, in Europe. He believed that the Comintern would soon reverse the strategy adopted at the Sixth Congress and eventually he and his followers would be reunited with the mainstream communist movement. However, the party was instructed by Roy not to publicly reveal its membership list or the composition of its Executive Committee; its open activities were to be conducted through legal organizations (undated handwritten document by M. N. Roy entitled 'Plan of Action and Organization', in the M. N. Roy Archives, File No. 111/1 in Nehru Museum. It is about the formation of RPIWC; the context indicates 1934 as its likely date of composition).

Besides trade unions, the most important organization through which the members of RPIWC could operate was the newly founded Congress Socialist Party. Personal interviews with early Royists and papers preserved in the M. N. Roy archives indicate that, besides Shaikh, the RPIWC included among its members Maniben Kara, V. B. Karnik, A. N. Shetty, C. Y. Chitinis, Charles Mascarenhas (Bombay), C. T. Daru, and Deshrathlal Thakar (Ahmedabad), K. K. Sinha and A. K. Mukherjee (U.P.), Kshiti and Dharitri Ganguli, Anadi and Adi Bhaduri, Rajani Mukherji (Calcutta), and probably M. C. Samaddar (Patna) and M. S. Mahanti (Cuttack). Tayab Shaikh's reports mentioned units in Bihar and Orissa; there were also members at Poona and in the industrial belt around Calcutta.

Like *Our Task in India*, *The Manifesto* was also an illegal publication and did not carry any printer's name, but very probably it was published from Calcutta, and copies were sent to the ECCI along with Roy's *Letter to CI*. The 'official' CPI had published a Manifesto in 1934 in the name of the 'Provisional Committee, Anti-Imperialist League' (the CPI had been declared illegal in July 1934) in which 'establishment of a Workers' and Peasants' Republic' had been included as one of the 'main tasks of the National Revolution', and Roy, his followers, and Congress Socialists had been severely attacked for raising the slogan of a Constituent Assembly which was condemned as a 'treacherous attempt to confuse the issue and to create counter-revolutionary illusions among the masses'. (Full text of this 'Manifesto' was enclosed with the Intelligence Bureau Director's note Dy No. 9449 secret S/Bol/34–1 dt 9.5.35: Home Pol. 1935/File 7/7). The Manifesto prepared by Roy gave a full statement of his analysis of the contemporary Indian situation, his estimate of the revolutionary forces in India, and of the potentialities of the Indian National Congress, his radical critique and total rejection of Gandhi and Gandhism, his appeal to the Congress Socialist Party to join the Royists in developing 'a revolutionary left wing inside the Congress to take over the leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle', his view of the role of the working class in accomplishing 'the overdue bourgeois democratic revolution', his ten-point programme that would give 'a concrete form to the ideal of Swaraj', his basic differences with the 'official' Communist Party, and a plan of 'concrete actions' in quest of 'the immediate goal of democratic national freedom'. Roy sharply distinguished between the contemporary Congress leadership and the Congress mass movement advocating overthrow of the Gandhian leadership and its replacement by an alternative radical, democratic leadership whose task would be to 'transform the Congress into a militant mass organization', that would, in actuality, be a 'fighting alliance of . . . the oppressed and exploited majority of the nation, composed of workers, peasants, artisans, small traders, employers, poor students, lower middle-class intellectuals'. The struggle of the oppressed and exploited for the redress of their immediate grievances and spread of revolutionary ideas would hasten the growth of powerful mass organizations that would 'eventually serve as the foundation for the Constituent Assembly'. The Constituent Assembly that 'represents repudiation of British Sovereignty in India' and 'commitment to the principle of democracy' 'can and will rise as the organ of insurrection . . . as the mighty instrument of popular revolt to assert the right of self-determination'.

Unlike *Our Task*, *The Manifesto* was published in the form of a royal size booklet (92 pages) with a grey cover. An underground publication, the printed text was also replete with errors of omission and commission. Editing has not been easy, but I have followed the same cautionary principle as in the case of *Our Task*—make necessary corrections with minimal alterations. Though short, it is an important work of Roy's Marxist period, and since it is a very rare work, I have included the complete text. Whatever one's view may be of Marxism/Communism, the point stressed here by Roy (and made both in his earlier and later writings) was that without a social revolution mere transfer of political power from British to Indian hands and substitution of the white by a brown bureaucracy would solve none of India's deep-seated problems. This seems to be borne out by the experience of post-Independence India.

SNR.

I The Development of Anti-Imperialist Struggle

India hovers on the verge of revolution. The struggle against imperialist domination is a revolutionary movement. A revolution cannot be artificially engineered. It takes place as a historic necessity. National freedom is a historic necessity because imperialist exploitation stands in the way to progress and prosperity of the Indian people. Nevertheless, there was no serious challenge to imperialist power until recently. As long as the masses of the Indian people remained in the tragic and traditional state of passivity, the position of imperialism was secure. But finally the security has been destroyed by imperialism itself. Colonial exploitation has driven the masses to despair. They have gradually sunk deeper and deeper in the abyss of poverty which is becoming veritable pauperism for millions. Under these circumstances, seething discontent began to break out into flames of sporadic rebellions. Traditional passivity was replaced by restlessness which became the outstanding feature of national life. A revolutionary ferment set in.

About 15 years ago India entered the stage of revolutionary discontent, which since has been broadening and deepening. The awakening of the masses sounds the death-knell of imperialism. Yet the history of the last 15 years has been a history of abortive struggle against imperialism. On the one hand, the demand for Swaraj has found echo in the remotest corners of the country; on the other, the ideal of national freedom has appeared within reach only to recede to an immemorable distance, shrouded in mystic vagueness. Larger and larger masses have flocked to fight the battles of freedom, only to be led from one disastrous defeat to another, or pyrrhic victory which only have had soporific effect upon mass activity. This paradoxical situation is explained by the fact that the growing anti-imperialist forces have been without a revolutionary leadership. This again is explained by the fact that the mass movement was too immature to develop the necessary leadership, ideology, and organization. It was rather a spontaneous agitation—an elemental revolutionary ferment—than an organized movement with a clearly visualized goal, following a definite course, under a consciously revolutionary, courageous, determined leadership.

The agitation developed under the auspices of the National Congress, which, encouraged by the awakening of the masses, came out of the blind alley of constitutionalism, and tended towards direct action. But in that fateful movement it came under the influence of Gandhiism which preached that the mass movement for national freedom should not travel through the road of revolutionary struggle. Thus the National Congress outgrew the old reformist leadership not to follow [a] revolutionary course, although it placed itself at the head of an objectively revolutionary mass movement. The spectacular rise of Gandhism appears to be an enigma. How could a revolutionary movement come so completely under the domination of an essentially counter-revolutionary ideology which, by its very nature, was bound to be its undoing? The answer is easily given. We only need to differentiate between the objective significance and the subjective role of the selfsame phenomenon.

For the time being, in the earlier days of the anti-imperialist mass movement Gandhism, particularly the personality of its prophet, performed a useful function. It quickened the political consciousness of the masses by interpreting policies in terms of religion. Thanks to intellectual backwardness, the greatest evil of imperialist domination, the bulk of the Indian people still think in terms of religion. The essence of the religious mode of though is the faith in the supernatural. Even though caught in the ferment of the revolutionary agitation, destined to change the conditions of the earthly life, the Indian masses lacked the confidence that they could bring about any such changes without the intervention of some superhuman force. To make up the lack of self-confidence, the movement created the *MAHATMA*, who could perform miracles, do the impossible. What the masses could not think of doing themselves would be realizable under the leadership of the Mahatma. Faith can move mountains. People who had never dreamt of national freedom, who had looked upon the British Raj as divine dispensation, were not only electrified by the ideal of Swaraj but believed that it will be attained in a year, when the Mahatma prophesied it. This objective function of Gandhism, for the time being, overshadowed essentially its subjective significance which is counter-revolutionary. It served as the mighty lever for the development of the forces of revolution, destined to disrupt the social condition that constitutes its material background.

The anti-imperialist agitation, however, eventually outgrew the initial stage in which the religious ideology of Gandhism and the superstitious faith in the miraculous power of the Mahatma performed a useful function. The awakened mass energy now had to be crystallized into revolutionary consciousness without which a successful struggle against imperialism was impossible. This could be done, mass agitation could be transformed into an organized movement only in the way that is prohibited by Gandhism, namely, militant mass action. Consequently, the National Congress, dominated by Gandhism, performed the meritorious task of involving larger and larger masses in the anti-imperialist agitation, but checked the development of militant activity. The result of this policy of going one step forward only to retrace two or more, was defeat whenever there was any encounter with the enemy. And in the atmosphere of mass discontent such encounters could not be always avoided. Every defeat meant [a] check upon the further development of the movement.

Nevertheless the struggle against imperialism continued by leaps and bounds. A defeat caused temporary demoralization. But before long the masses were again ready to take up the fight and responded enthusiastically to the call of the Congress which had led them to disaster only the other day. Even in the regrettable absence of a revolutionary leadership, the struggle against imperialism went on; larger and larger forces entered the struggle, because objective conditions were favourable for it. They have been growing more so all the time. During the last 10 or 15 years, while the British Rulers of India have been beating down the forces of freedom with ruthless violence, the economic condition of the masses has been growing still worse. No improvement is possible within the 'iron frame' of colonial exploitation which must be intensified in these days of general capitalist decline. The effect of the world capitalist crisis has been ruinous for the agricultural economy of India. The heavy fall in the prices of the primary production of India has meant bankruptcy for the peasantry, the great bulk of which has lived for a long time on the verge of starvation.[1] The bankruptcy of the peasantry in a primarily agricultural country means [a] severe crisis of the entire national economy. Heavy fall in the purchasing power of the great majority of the population has caused a contraction of the internal market. Consequently, manufacturing industries—mechanized as well as handicraft—must stagnate, causing unemployment and lower wages. Self-supporting artisans are ruined. Contracting of market means destitution of small traders. In this situation mass discontent must grow. The stability of the established regime was guaranteed by the confidence of the masses. Today that bedrock of British rule is shaken. The masses have lost their confidence in it. They have nothing to lose but their chains, and they are beginning to realize, though dimly as yet, that there is a world to gain.

Despite such favourable objective conditions, which grow more so every day aggravating mass discontent, fomenting the revolutionary ferment to the point of open rebellion, the National Congress has practically liquidated the struggle against imperialism. During the last 15 eventful years the oppressed masses have enthusiastically followed the lead of the Congress. They have always been ready to fight at the command of the Congress. Yet the Congress has led the forces of freedom from one defeat to another. It has signally failed to lead the anti-imperialist struggle which is a historic necessity, and as such is sure to succeed provided that the favourable objective conditions are properly utilized by a subjective factor which itself must also grow out of the situation. In other words, there must appear on the scene a consciously revolutionary leadership to develop, organize, direct the objective forces of revolution in the struggle for freedom. This urgently needed leadership can be provided only by a party representing the oppressed and exploited masses.

A revolution, however necessary, is not always inevitable. The objective forces of revolution may not develop quickly and insistently in the absence of the required leadership. Even when developed to powerful proportions they can be beaten down if they are not led on the right road, clearly conscious of the goal and determined. They will be discouraged, disintegrated, and even destroyed by false or faulty leadership. From the very beginning the forces of Indian revolution have been labouring under the misfortune of being under a leadership which is false as well as faulty.

A decisive condition for the development and success of a revolutionary movement is the rise of [a] revolutionary party to lead it. The revolutionary party is the subjective factor; the instrument for carrying through the revolution—which grows out of the social background of the revolutionary struggle as an instrument forged by the objective forces of revolution. The party that can and does lead a revolutionary movement through the successive stages of developing struggle to final victory must be the representative of the most revolutionary class. It must be created by that class of people which is irreconcilably antagonistic to the established regime, that is, the class of people which bears the brunt of the entire burden of oppression and exploitation, all avenues to the improvement of the conditions of which class are blocked by the established regime. The revolutionary party is the conscious vanguard of the exploited and oppressed masses.

To carry through the impending revolution India needs a revolutionary party. To attain maturity, to acquire political education in actual struggle, to create an organization strong enough to survive repression and terror, to harass the enemy in every possible way, to deal the final blow at the proper moment—for all these purposes the anti-imperialist forces need a revolutionary party. Such a party must be the creation of the oppressed and exploited masses—their representative, their champion, their vanguard, their instrument, their leader. Forces to go into the making of the party have been crystallizing out of the process of the revolutionary ferment ever since this began. They had to overcome great difficulties—of diverse nature. Finally the party has formed itself and has taken the field to discharge the role alloted to it by history. The revolutionary working class party (C.P. of India) is born in the midst of anti-imperialist struggle to meet the necessity of that struggle—to provide it with a revolutionary leadership, to make the forces involved in it conscious of their own revolutionary nature, help them to visualize their goal clearly and organize them for the struggle ahead. The revolutionary working class party of India will fight for the overthrow of imperialist domination as a necessary step towards the socialist revolution that India needs so urgently and indispensibly.

Note

[1] 'The price movement in the 1930s, characterized by a sharp downward trend, had disastrous consequences for the peasantry. Between 1929 and 1937 the prices of winter rice fell by 42.4 per cent, and those for jute by 22.2 per cent, the worst years for jute being 1933 and 1934, when compared with 1929 the prices fell by 57 per cent. The percentage of the fall between 1928 and 1934 in the prices of pulses, oilseeds, and other food articles was 45, 34, and 37 respectively'. *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. II, ed. Dharma Kumar, Orient Longman and CUP, 1984, p. 148. SNR.

II The Forces of National Revolution

National freedom is not a goal by itself. It is the means to an end which is greater than simple political liberation. The evils which eat into the vitals of India will not be cured by the transfer of political power from the British to the native upper classes. The chance of their eradication is still less through their substitution of the white bureaucracy by a brown bureaucracy, that is, through some administrative adjustment within the framework of imperialism, such as dominion status or 'substance of independence'. India requires a social revolution.

To begin with she must undergo the process of social transformation which occured in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As a result of these great revolutions took place in Europe was placed at the van of modern civilization. Since the overthrow of imperialism is a condition necessary for the accomplishment of the greatly delayed social transformation, anti-imperialist forces, that is, the forces of national freedom will naturally be contributed by those sections of the people which will be benefited by a social revolution. On the other hand, the classes which will lose their privileged position in consequence of the revolution, necessary for the progress and prosperity of the people as a whole and which are therefore hostile to it, cannot be counted among the forces of national liberation. They may be patriotic in their profession but are sure to desert and betray the anti-imperialist struggle as soon as it will develop the tendency to go further than they wish it to go. And they naturally do not wish it to go to the extent of overthrowing imperialism, because the imperialist state guarantees their privileged position. In short, the battle of national freedom can be and will be fought and won by the exploited masses—the workers, peasants, artisans, employees, small traders, declassed intellectuals, students, etc.—while the upper classes—the princes, landlords, financiers, industrialists, merchants, moneylenders—are actual or potential allies of imperialism.

It is erroneous to hold the idea that India as a whole is exploited by the foreign rulers. This erroneous idea has prevented the development of the anti-imperialist struggle taking place under the banner of the National Congress. It does not permit the differentiation of the sheep from the goat. It places the nationalist movement under the dangerous illusion of taking enemies for friends and prevents it from drawing upon the one main source of strength in order to maintain the false friendship of potential enemies. One does not require to have any particular sociological insight or economic wisdom to realize that the princes and their subjects, the landlords and their tenants, the capitalists and their wage-slaves, do not stand in the same relationship with imperialism. It is not patriotism but sloppy sentimentalism to say that the papered princes, parasitic landlords, the opulent capitalists of India are oppressed and exploited by British Imperialism. It is hardly necessary to argue the point as regards the first two categories of indigenous oppressors and exploiters. They have not been harmed in any way by the British rule in India. On the contrary, the advent of the foreign power saved these classes from natural extinction, and galvanized them into a parasitic existence as the social basis, so to say, of the colonial exploitation of the Indian masses—a ruinous form of exploitation which placed a decisive check upon the normal economic development of that country. But for the guarantee offered by the imperialist power, these parasitic classes would have been swept away by the rise of progressive forces. They would have gone the way of their comperes of Europe. A bourgeois democratic revolution would have cleared India of the ugly ruins of barbarism and patriarchal reaction. Thus there can be no question as to the relation of the princes and landlords with imperialism. They are today partners in an unholy alliance. Native feudalism and foreign imperialism are the twin pillars of the rapacious system of colonial exploitation which has ruined the Indian masses and sunk the nation into the depth of intellectual stagnation, cultural reaction, and moral degeneration. These oppressors of the Indian masses must stand or fall together. Even today the princes are torpedoing the familiar scheme of federation so that their imperialist ally and patron may find the way to reducing the projected reform to the most minimum and shelve the question of responsibility in the centre for ever. Whatever may happen to the ill-fated scheme of federation, the absolute position of the princes in their own domains will have the guarantee of imperialism. As against this guarantee, princely India will remain a faithful feudatory to British Imperialism in its efforts to suppress the forces of progress and revolution throughout the country.[2]

The privileges enjoyed by the landlords are left untouched even in these days of financial stress. A considerable portion of the proceeds from the exploitation of the peasantry is appropriated by the landowning class. Some encroachment on the privilege of this parasitic class would greatly increase public revenue. All the provincial governments are bankrupt. They have not been able to balance their budgets for years. The financial position of the Central Government is hardly any better. The budget is balanced by continued increase of indirect taxation, the burden of which falls on the masses. But imposition of income tax on the income from landed property is never considered.

One need[s] to know only the fact to free himself from the absurd notion that the princes and landlords are oppressed by imperialism. The proceeds of exploitation of the Indian masses, expressed in terms of money, amount to, on the average, about 450 corers of rupees a year. Of this 250 crores go to imperialism. The remainder is the share of the Indian princes and landlords. During the last couple of years India has sold over 250 crores of rupees worth of gold. This huge sum represents but a fraction of the wealth accumulated in the possession of the Indian upper classes, particularly the landowners and moneylenders. Enormous income of the landowning class is the result of a parasitic form of property in land which must disappear with imperialist domination if India is to become a modern civilized nation, materially prosperous and culturally progressive. Consequently, those enjoying this unearned income can never participate in the anti-imperialist struggle except with the sinister purpose of checking, disorganizing, sabotaging, and betraying it. Imperialism guarantees the existence of this parasitic class because the latter represents a form of the relation of property in land which is a condition for colonial exploitation. Unless the peasantry is kept on the verge of pauperization they cannot be deprived practically of the entire surplus produce of their labour.

The position of the capitalists is somewhat different. In their case also it is equally absurd to talk of oppression. But their relation with imperialism is not without antagonism, though not of the kind that breeds a revolution. In other words, it is not irreconcilable antagonism. Indian capitalists are 'oppressed' in the sense that their freedom to exploit Indian labour is restricted. They are not deprived of any part of their actual income. Their loss is hypothetical; they do not gain as much or as they would or might gain if they were masters of their country. But in such a position a class does not take up the revolutionary struggle. A revolution is brought about by those who have nothing to lose but their chains, and are inspired by the vision of a world to gain. For the Indian capitalists to follow the path of revolutionary struggle against imperialism would be like risking the reality, however, meagre it may be, in a chase after the shadow. Under the given conditions, they go by the sound principle of a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. That does not mean that they do not hanker after more and are not prepared to make some efforts for that human purpose. But while trying to get at the bird in the bush, they hold firmly on to the one in hand. The least suspicion of any injury to this reality compels them to abjure the struggle for the problematically possible.

Indian capitalists are tied to the imperialist power primarily by the chain of law and order. The economic life of the country was hopelessly disorganized in the long period of civil war and political chaos that followed the dissolution of the Mughal Empire. The British conquests established a central government on the ruins of the feudal anarchy. They brought order out of chaos. Under pax Brittanica productive activities revived—trade can flourish only under peaceful conditions. Restricted within the iron bounds of colonial economy, productive forces could not develop freely. But the exigencies of colonial exploitation—opening of new markets for imported goods and trapping of new sources for raw materials—give great impetus to trade. The road to industrial investment closed before it. Indian capital found employment in trade and thus became a subsidiary to British finance—an instrument of colonial exploitation of the Indian masses. This exploitation in its turn created new obstacles to the industrial development of the country because it pauperized the peasantry (85 per cent of the population) by depriving them of the entire surplus product of agriculture. Pauperization of the great majority of the population set rigid limits to the expansion of the market, and without the expansion of the internal market no country can have normal industrial development. Indian capitalists being largely traders are partners in the lucrative business of the colonial exploitation of their country. Consequently, they cannot be hostile to imperialism although they smart under the restrictions the latter places upon their ambitions. They naturally strive for some slackening of these restrictions and play patriots in order to have the nationalist movement secure for them some concessions. But they cannot be expected to cut the branch on which they sit. They are decidedly opposed to any revolutionary movement against the established regime which maintains law and order so essential for trade. The Gandhiist philosophy of non-violence and passive resistance is largely determined by the interests of the trading class. This philosophy has paralysed the anti-imperialist movement. Revolutions are always followed by a period of unsettled conditions. It necessarily takes some time to build a new order of peace and security after the overthrow of the old regime. That period of revolutionary disturbance will unavoidably harm the sectional interests of the capitalists, although it must be gone through for the future welfare of the nation as a whole. But the capitalists won't risk their class interests for national progress and prosperity. Therefore they are hostile to any revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of imperialism. They would rather have security of what they possess and may acquire under the given conditions of law and order with the hope of getting some more, gradually by peaceful and constitutional means, that is, as a gift of imperialism.

Their hope is not utterly misplaced. Development of Indian capitalism is not altogether excluded under the imperialist regime. Had it not been so, the capitalists would have been a revolutionary class—a dependable force in the revolutionary struggle for national freedom. A class revolts against the established political regime and strives to overthrow it only when all possibilities for further development of the class are blocked. Imperialism has not permitted and would never permit the development of capitalism as a revolutionary force. It has always protected capitalism as a reactionary factor—an instrument of colonial exploitation. Lately even industrial capitalism has been developing in India under the patronage of the imperialist government. It is being fostered as a force of counter-revolution. Partly compelled by its internal crisis and partly to placate the Indian capitalists so that these may not join the anti-imperialist struggle, imperialism has lately been making substantial concessions to them.[3] The policy of the imperialist government during the last 15 years has been one of economic concession and political repression: in other words, to meet the economic and political demands of the capitalists, while facing the rising forces of revolution with brutal violence. This policy has made the capitalists more attached to imperialism and, under their influence, exercised directly or indirectly, the nationalist movement has failed to develop into a revolutionary struggle for freedom, having drifted towards compromise with imperialism.

The main grievance of the Indian capitalists was the policy of free trade pursued by imperialism in its days of prosperity. Indian capitalists clamoured for protection for the indigenous industry. The nationalist movement enthusiastically supported the demand. This basic demand of Indian capitalism has been conceded to a very great extent. The average nationalist who entertains the fantastic idea that all sections of the Indian people—princes and peasants, landlords and tenants, capitalists and workers—are all oppressed by imperialism still believe that protection to indigenous industry will cure the economic evils of the country. They do not realize that today India enjoys the harmful blessing of a very high import duty. It is not called protection but revenue tariff. But the fact is that the main industry of India—cotton textiles—is today sheltered by a tariff wall which is not equalled in any other country. Iron and steel also enjoy a high tariff. Similarly, a series of other industries. Since 1931 import duties, on the whole, have been increased by nearly 10 per cent. If modern industry still grows slowly in India, it is because protectionism is not as beneficial for it as is believed by nationalists. As a matter of fact, high import duties, while benefiting the industrialists immediately, is checking the development of national economy on the whole. It has artificially raised the price of manufactured goods just when agricultural prices have been declining heavily. The result has been a contraction of the internal market which is a decisive check upon industrialization on a large scale, as would revolutionize the entire national economy, raise the standard of living of the people at large.

In addition to the coveted boon of protective tariff, which promotes the immediate interests of a few capitalists at the expense of the future welfare of the nation, considerable political power will soon be granted to the Indian capitalists. Native upper classes are being armed to help foreign imperialism in their difficult task of beating down the rising forces of revolution. That is the meaning of the projected reforms in a nutshell. Nationalist opposition to the new Constitution, whether as voiced judiciously by moderates, or demagogically by the Congress, is simply bargaining to secure as much as possible without risking revolutionary fight. The sinister significance of the new Constitution was exposed by a Labour M.P. in the course of a debate in the House of Commons. Criticizing the system of indirect election to the Federal Legislature, he said that the second chamber would be the richest body in the world. It certainly would be a body devised to protect the right of property, not only British but also Indian. This is a very correct characterization of the situation that would be created under the new Constitution. The antagonism between Indian capitalism and British Imperialism will be reconciled so that the united counter-revolutionary front may be presented to the masses which are being driven to revolt against intolerable oppression and exploitation.

Even today the imperialist state defends the right of the Indian capitalists against any attack by the workers. In every industrial dispute the police and the foreign government is placed at the disposal of the national industrialists to crush the Indian workers struggling for some improvements of their intolerable conditions of life. Courts of law uphold the capitalists' right to exploit the workers and are always ready to inflict heavy sentences on those who dispute this sacred right even theoretically. If old laws are not sufficient for the purpose, the government is always willing to make new laws to suppress the activities for the welfare of the working class. Lately, a number of trade unions have been suppressed because they were under Communist leadership or influence. Defending this high-handedness before the Legislative Assembly, the spokesman of the Government of India revealed the relation between British Imperialism and Indian Capitalism, together with the more reactionary elements of the native society. He declared that the Government is determined to crush the Communists because their object is to destroy not only the present form of government but also the present order of society. Imperialism thus appears the doughty champion of the established order in which the feudal princes, parasitic landlords, and selfish capitalists enjoy the right to exploit the majority of the people. In view of the reality of this relation one cannot entertain the illusion about the patriotism of the capitalists. Theirs is a patriotism of the pocket, and since imperialism does not touch their pocket but instead protects it against all danger, actual or potential, the capitalists cannot be counted among the forces of national revolution. Their doubtful allegiance is not an asset, but a serious handicap for the struggle against imperialism.

The social tasks of the imminent revolution that will begin by overthrowing imperialist domination are such as are required for the free development of capitalism. It may appear strange that the Indian capitalists do not participate in a revolutionary movement which would prepare the way to their aggrandizement. This strange situation has been created by historical reasons. A revolution is led by that class whose particular interests happen to coincide with the interests of the whole society at that particular time. Today the interest of Indian capitalism is actually antagonistic to national interest. This demands overthrowing of imperialism, whereas the capitalists require and are eager to retain the powerful protection of the imperialist state. Having grown within the framework of the parasitic system of colonial exploitation, Indian capitalism is closely allied with the backward social conditions on which this system is based. Consequently, it is unable to accomplish the social tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution which is necessary for the economic prosperity and cultural progress of the Indian people. As national freedom is not an end in itself, but a means to the goal of social revolution, a class hostile to such a revolution, or one not striving for that goal, at any rate, cannot be a force in the anti-imperialist struggle. The economic evils that eat into the vitals of the Indian society cannot be cured by capitalists in this epoch of capitalist decay when capitalism as a world force has played out its revolutionary role. India cannot become a modern industrial country on the basis of the capitalist mode of production. Under the given world conditions, capitalism can have precarious growth in India as an adjunct of imperialism and upon the economic ruin of the masses. To hold its own against competition from more advanced industrial countries, it must have the advantage of cheap labour and cheap raw material. This advantage can be had as long as wages remain on the starvation level and peasants are kept on the verge of pauperization. In other words, industrial development of India on the basis of capitalism can take place at the expense of economic ruin and cultural degeneration of the great majority of the nation. As such a line of development would necessarily aggravate mass discontent and accentuate the revolutionary crisis, the capitalists wish to play safe. And the desired safety is guaranteed by the imperialist state. Therefore, they can never participate in the struggle for the destruction of this bulwark of their precarious existence.

Imperialism will be fought and overthrown by the oppressed and exploited masses. The interests of the vast majority of the Indian people—peasants, workers, artisans, small traders, employees, students, poor intellectuals—are irreconcilably antagonistic to the interests of imperialism. For the entire burden of imperialist exploitation falls on their bent back. The so called 'drain' of India's national wealth does not touch the fringe of the accumulated and progressively accumulating wealth in the possession of the propertied classes. Outright plunder and spoliation were features of the earlier days of the British conquest. Such crude methods are not part of the modern imperialist exploitation because it does not pay to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. The golden eggs, appropriated as imperialist tribute, are laid by the productive masses. Imperialist tribute represents a portion of the total value produced recurringly—year after year—and the value that can be expressed in terms of money are produced by labour. Therefore every *pice* of the enormous amount that the British rulers extract from India is paid by those who perform some form of productive labour—manual or mental. The fortunate few princes, landlords, and capitalists, who live in idle luxury or thrive by exploiting the masses, are exempt from making any contribution in payment of the protection guaranteed to their privileged position by the imperialist state. The tribute extracted by imperialism plus that which is appropriated by the native owners of the means of production (land and capital) absorbed practically the entire surplus production of the aggregate labour power of India; in other words, what is produced by the toiling masses over and above the barest necessities of life is taken away from them in the form of rent, taxes, interest, profit (appropriated by native capital) and super-profit (the net share of imperialism). Colonial exploitation keeps the productive masses on the brink of starvation. Feudal absolutism of the princes and landlords, (Indian) capitalism and usury; all these are integral parts of the ruinous system of colonial economy. Under this rapacious system of legalized plunder, there is no possibility of the least improvement of the condition of the masses. On the contrary, of late, the conditions have gone from bad to worse. This process leading towards economic destitution has brought about the phenomena of mass awakening which heralds the much delayed revolution.

Revolution becomes imminent and gives rise to certain subsidiary factors inevitably when the established regime can no longer maintain itself without ever-increasing pressure upon the masses, thereby driving them into destitution and despair. Naturally, the established regime does not voluntarily invite the forces of its own destruction. Not for charity, but to save itself, it tries not to drive the masses to a position when they must revolt or go down abjectly into the dark abyss of economic destitution, moral disintegration, physical decay. Some concessions to the particular section of the exploited masses, reforms, organized charity, rationalization of the modes of exploitation—these among others—are the emergency measures taken by the established regime in distress. None of these are available to the imperialist rulers of India.

No political regime can exist for any length of time, unless it performs some social functions; unless it enjoys the confidence of the masses legitimately or fraudulently. For a long time the British rule in India was secured by the confidence of the masses. In the beginning that confidence was won entirely by fraudulent methods. The British conquerors in the beginning played a socially useful role. Law and order established by them enabled the masses to carry on productive activities without molestation. Thus the British Raj came to be looked upon by the masses as their protector, Ma Baap. They paid very dearly for the protection; but they did not feel the pinch because they knew more or less what was their obligation, and whatever was left, this was discharged after they felt, it was theirs to be enjoyed peacefully. Further, under peaceful conditions productive (largely agricultural) and commercial activities expanded within the limit of colonial economy. Yet the relative expansion was very considerable. Consequently there was some rise in the standard of living of the toiling masses. Those were days of imperialist prosperity. The golden age of imperialism is long past. The expansion and relative improvement possible within the bounds of colonial economy soon reached its limits. There was period of stagnation which has been followed necessarily by the present crisis, which deprives imperialism of all the possibilities of manoeuvring for position. In the golden days of prosperity colonial possessions constituted the reserves of imperialism. They were developed. The tribute extracted from them, except in the earlier days of outright robbery, was not actually taken away. It was largely invested as capital in the colonial countries, quickening their economic life and raising their value reserves of imperialism. Now the limit has come when imperialism must draw upon the colonial reserves built up in the past. Its internal crisis compells it to do so. This means that the miserably low standard of living of the Indian masses, established for the exigency of building up the colonial reserves, can no longer be maintained. It must go down under the brutal impact of intensified exploitation. The process began already during the world war as an emergency. Since then, it has become the outstanding feature of the economic life of India. The political movement, the development of the anti-imperialist struggle, is the reflex of the process.

The revolutionary process must go on at an accelerated speed. It cannot be arrested under colonial economy. Just when imperialism must draw upon its colonial reserves, the surplus of Indian economy is getting seriously depleted under the impact of world trade depression. Owing to the fall of agricultural prices since 1930, the aggregate income of the Indian masses has been decreasing at the alarming rate of Rs 800 crores a year. Consequently collection of imperialist tribute is cutting into the production, that is to say, depriving the producing masses even of the most minimum necessities of life. Indian masses are thus threatened with physical decay. The way out is revolt.

The agrarian problem lies at the very root of the present crisis in the economic life of India. The solution of the basic economic problem is not possible under the existing social–political order; the solution requires a social revolution—disruption of the existing system of landownership. Imperialism cannot permit the disruption of the reactionary social relations and the resulting backward modes of production on which the entire parasitic structure of colonial exploitation is reared. For more than a decade the government has been trying to head off the crisis by some measure of agrarian reform. But absolutely nothing has been accomplished. It cannot be done because an enormous sum of money is required for the purpose. Either the required wherewithal must be provided by the State or the privilege of the landowning classes must be encroached upon. Both the ways are closed. The former is precluded by the dangerous instability of the state finance caused by the economic decline. To raise the required fund new taxation must be imposed. The taxable capacity of the masses of India is already overburdened. New taxation will mean aggravation of the conditions of the peasantry, consequently sharpening of the economic crisis, before any measure of reform is introduced. Confiscation of the unearned income of the landed aristocracy would provide the necessary fund. That however implies a social revolution—abolition of the form of land ownership that produces the unearned income by ruining the peasant. The government has shown no inclination to undermine its social basis, particularly when it has forfeited its security given by mass acquiescence to the existing regime. To beat down the rising tide of mass revolt, imperialism today needs the loyalty of the landed aristocracy in addition to support of the feudatory chiefs. Therefore it will not tamper with the decayed social system which places these parasites in a privileged position. The welfare of the nation cries aloud for a social revolution, delayed for two centuries at least. Imperialism blocks the way. It must be overthrown. It is the revolutionary task of the masses to do so. History has given them this role of honour. It is a difficult role. But they are going to discharge it. The future of India is not in the lap of gods, nor will it be worked out by the fortunate few of her sons. These have stakes in her present misery. Their very existence is interwoven with the system of colonial exploitation that has ruined the nation as a whole. The future of India will be worked out by the masses who are awakening to take up a gigantic revolutionary struggle for freedom. They are fit for this historic role of honour because they have nothing to lose but their chains of colonial slavery, and a world of political freedom, economic, and social emancipation to gain.

Notes

[2] This refers to the draft of constitutional proposals set out by the British government in the form of a White Paper in March 1933, subsequently modified in several major respects by a Joint Select Committee of the British Parliament which produced its Report in 1934, and was eventually embodied in the Government of India Act 1935. The Act provided for a Federation of India consisting of the British Indian provinces and the Indian states. The Federal legislature was to consist of two houses—the Federal Assembly

and the Council of State. The Indian states, with their population of only 24 per cent of the total population of India, were to have 40 per cent of the seats in the Council and a little over one-third of the seats in the Assembly. The representatives from the Indian states were to be appointed by the princes and not elected by their people. The princes were left to enjoy their autocratic powers except in matters of defence, communication, and foreign affairs, which were to be controlled by the Federal Executive. The Federal Executive was not made responsible to the Federal Legislature. (B. R. Pandey, *The Breakup of British India*. Macmillan, London, 1969, p. 139.) The provincial part of the constitution was implemented in 1937 when in the elections the Congress won a clear majority in six out of the eleven provinces. The Federal part was never implemented. For details of the relevant documents, M. Gwyer and A. Appadorai, eds., *Speeches and Documents on the Indian Constitution 1927–47*, 2 Vols., OUP, 1957. SNR.

[3] This argument was at the heart of the so-called 'Docolonization Thesis'. In Roy's view, the pressure of economic circumstances after the first world war was forcing British capitalists to seek a partnership with Indian capital, a policy that promoted a measure of industrial development and political concessions in India but retained control of the Indian political economy in British hands, negating the possibility of the Indian bourgeoisie leading a struggle for complete independence and social revolution. In this context the following observations of the noted economic historian Vera Anstey appear to be relevant:

> . . . the high levels of industrial investment and of output by large scale industries, all of which (except the jute mill industry) catered mainly for the home market, were unaccompanied by any corresponding rise in the purchasing power of the masses, and hence led to 'underconsumption'. . . . the most striking feature of Indian industrial development at this period was that it occurred entirely under the shelter of protective tariffs. . . . The decline in foreign lending did, however, encourage the volume of Indian business capital to enter the Indian industrial market . . . with the result that the more recently established large scale industries—sugar-refining, cement and paper—have been largely financed by Indian capital . . . the extension of protection encouraged foreign capitalists to register companies in India, under the fashionable title '(India) Limited', which were subsidiaries of foreign concerns'. [Vera Anstey, *The Economic Development of India*, 1957 edn. Longman Green, London, pp. 495–6].

According to Vera Anstey, the number of Joint Stock companies registered and at work in British India increased from 5, 388 in 1927–28 to 10, 061 in 1936–7. According to the British Associated Chambers of Commerce (India) the amount of British capital invested in India was £1000 million in 1933 whereas in 1928–9 it was £354 million. *Economic Journal*, 1932, p. 571; Wadia and Merchant, *Our Economic Problem*, 1943, p. 481. SNR.

III The National Congress and the Anti-Imperialist Struggle

Thanks to the awakening of the masses, the National Congress became a powerful political organization. But it has signally failed to lead the anti-imperialist forces towards the goal of national liberation. The failure is due to the inability of the Congress leaders to appreciate the social significance of the forces at their command. In other words, the ideology and programme of the Congress did not reflect the objective striving of the mass movement developing under its banner. The Congress leaders did not care to learn what the masses want. They prescribed what the masses should want. They were ignorant of, or indifferent to, the objective causes of the revolutionary ferment. They appreciated it as the creation of the Mahatma; a monument to his superhuman power. Consequently the movement was denied the freedom of developing its intrinsic potentialities and became an object of 'experiment with truth'. Only, in the experiment the truth was overlooked; the truth being the intolerable socio–political conditions and the mass revolt against them. The movement represented the urge to go forward. It was revolt not only against the present conditions but also against the social, cultural, and ideological conditions which had made India an easy prey to the mercantile adventurers from Europe. The movement pointed towards the future to be conquered. The Congress gave it a leadership which negatived the present in terms of an idealized past. The Congress did not look forward, in the future. It had its eyes on the past—on a legendary golden age. This contradiction between the objective tendency of the movement—a tendency born of the historical necessity—and the subjective predilections of the leaders—was fateful.

Of course, even a Mahatma cannot teach the Ganges to get rid of the perverse tendency to flow downwards towards the ocean, getting dirty in the journey, and return to the pristine purity of its source on the Himalaya. Even a Mahatma cannot do that much; but he can, enthusiastically assisted by an army of devoted disciples, dam the flow of the stream, for some time at any rate, and create a stagnant pool. This is exactly what the Congress has done to the anti-imperialist movement. It tried to lead the movement, not along the channel marked out by history—a channel the movement must follow in order to reach its goal—but in the course prescribed by the tenets of Gandhism. The result has been confusion of issues, dissipation of energy, repeated defeat and disintegration of the movement.

The failure of the Congress to lead the forces placed at its command was due concretely to its inability or unwillingness to differentiate between the patriotism of pocket professed vociferously by the propertied classes and the enthusiasm of the oppressed and exploited masses for the ideal of Swaraj. As a matter of fact, while proclaiming itself to be the champion of the masses, the Congress attached greater importance to the patriotism of the upper classes and consequently was influenced, directly or indirectly, by them. Thus, while leading a movement for the overthrow of imperialism, the Congress was socially orientated, unconsciously to a large extent, towards those sections of the Indian people whose antagonism with imperialism is superficial and therefore will be composed with some concessions made to their particular interest.

A defeat is not always discrediting. An army cannot always be led to victory. A mass movement of vast revolutionary potentialities can be resisted, checked, and repulsed by superior forces of the established regime, the superiority of the latter resulting from the facts of their organization and the position of vantage from which they operate. In contrast to the superiority of the enemy, the forces of Indian revolution at the command of the Congress were immature, inexperienced, and unorganized. It is no wonder that the latter should be defeated, in the initial clashes with the established regime. The task of the leadership was to develop the spontaneous mass revolt into an organized movement and supply the movement with a clear ideology and concrete programme reflecting the objective strivings of the masses. While accomplishing this initial task, care should be taken to avoid premature clashes as far as possible. Congress leadership was lacking in this revolutionary foresight and tactical skill. It neglected the initial task of developing the fighting power of the masses. As a matter of fact, it was a studied negligence. The philosophy of Gandhism which constituted the ideological equipment of the Congress, discourages the progress of revolutionary development. Yet the Congress led the immature, unorganized mass movement to premature clashes with superior forces of imperialism. The resulting defeats, therefore, were not due to disadvantageous position. They were the results of inept generalship which pitched the army against superior forces without giving it the most elementary training, without equipping it with the most indispensable weapon, without guaranteeing it the most minimum supply, and without a line of retreat.

It was not by accident that the Congress lacked the most rudimentary qualities of generalship. It was not what could be excused as [an] honest mistake. The Congress led the anti-imperialist forces from one discrediting defeat to another in futile skirmishes with the forces of [the] established regime, because it would not lead them in the way of more effective forms of struggle—forms that would avoid premature clashes and yet prompt the fighting power, organizational stability, and revolutionary consciousness of the masses.

The masses were revolting against the intolerable conditions of their daily life. Their political awakening represented consciousness of their most immediate grievances. This being the case, their elementary discontent could be deepened into revolutionary consciousness and the spontaneous agitation could be crystallized into an organized movement only in one way. That was to lead the masses in a struggle against the intolerable conditions of their life—against the grievances that they felt directly and tangibly. For the rural masses (and the vast majority of the Indian people live in villages) foreign rule is a remote evil. In their daily life they seldom come face to face with it. They are up against the landlord (together with all the evils of landlordism), the moneylender, and the tax-collector. Inasmuch as these are the instruments of colonial exploitation, the discontent against them is a potential revolt against imperialism. Accentuate the discontent against the evils directly felt and the revolt against the unseen enemy will become conscious. Lead the rural masses in the struggle for the redress of their directly felt grievances and you will be mobilizing the anti-imperialist forces in battle array. You will be training them for the coming struggle against imperialism. You will be giving them the political education necessary for the development of the revolutionary national consciousness. You will be creating powerful mass organizations adequately equipped for the combat—offensive as well as defensive. Concretely, the only way for the development of the widespread mass discontent is the organization of the mass struggle with definite economic demands such as reduction of rent, taxes, interest, and protection of peasantry against the excesses of landlordism and usury; in the case of the proletarian masses, higher wages, better conditions of labour, and social insurance. To invest the struggle with a dynamic character, that is, to place before it the perspective of self-development, the immediate and partial demands should be linked up with the programme of democratic revolution, and abolition of landlordism; transfer of ownership of land to the actual cultivator, liquidation of the indebtedness of peasants and artisans; shifting off the burden from the masses to the possessors of unearned income. In this way the masses would be involved in a struggle for concrete things—the things they actually want. Consequently, they would participate in the struggle with great enthusiasm. But presently they would realize that that their most minimum demands cannot be satisfied. That experience would broaden their vision, deepen their political consciousness, and quicken their revolutionary will to fight. They would realize the fact that their immediate grievances are the results of the more deep-seated evil. They would come face to face with imperialism. National freedom would be brought within their comprehension. Experience would teach them that the grievances of the daily life are linked up with the evil of foreign rule which would thus cease to be a remote thing of no immediate concern.

The struggle for partial economic demands would involve the vast majority of the nation automatically in the general political struggle for national freedom—for the overthrow of imperialism. And in the course of this automatic development, mass energy would have been mobilized progressively; the masses would have acquired political education; they would have created their revolutionary organizations ready to face the forces of imperialism. Even such a development would not altogether exclude the possibility of a defeat. But then, the defeat would no longer demoralize and disintegrate the force of revolution.

But the Congress, under the inspired guidance of the Mahatma, would not travel the way that it should have taken had it seriously desired the development of the mass discontent into a powerful revolutionary mass movement. Instead of leading the masses for struggle for concrete things they immediately and consciously wanted, the Congress placed before them the vague ideal of Swaraj. Instead of developing the (social) revolutionary consciousness of the masses, the Congress preached to them the imaginary glory of social backwardness, symbolized by *charkha* and *khaddar*, and paralysed their incipient spirit of revolt with the cult of suffering and sacrifice. The masses wanted bread, the Congress gave them stone. They were rising from their agelong slumber to march ahead and conquer the future. The Mahatma preached to them the virtue of submission. The masses were rising to conquer a new world of worldly progress and prosperity; the apostles of Gandhism called upon them to sacrifice what little they still had. In short, Gandhism effectively emasculated the forces of national liberation, and transformed the goal of Swaraj into a mystic metaphysical ideal, never to be realized because it is unrealizable.

When the immature, amorphous and unorganized forces were pitched into premature clashes with the hosts of imperialism, they were sent to sure defeat. Demoralization and disintegration inevitably result from a defeat when the army lacks determination that is bred of a clarity of purpose.

The Congress failed to develop the popular anti-imperialist forces, because its ideal of Swaraj, even if this is interpreted as complete independence, does not represent the social revolution which is a historic necessity. As the overthrow of imperialism is necessary as a prelude to the long-delayed social revolution, [the] political freedom of India will be conquered by the forces making for a social revolution. The goal of National freedom, abstracted from a comprehensive programme of social revolution, will never be realized. The Congress has been endeavouring to lead the masses towards this goal of simple political freedom. This being unrealizable, the struggle for it has only dissipated mass energy. In the course of the last 15 years the goal of political freedom has receded further and further until the Congress today has all but given up the chase after chimera, and is pathetically hoping for something which could be accepted as the 'substance of independence'.

India will attain political freedom as the prelude to a great social revolution or she will go down in the chains of colonial slavery. This is the lesson to be learnt from a critical study of history and analysis of the given conditions of India. The Congress did not learn this lesson. It claimed to champion the interests of the masses, but it has all along failed to stand by the masses in the anxiety to win and retain the patronage of the upper classes. This is the reason why it stubbornly refused to travel the way of developing the anti-imperialist forces in the course of a struggle on the basis of concrete economic demands of the oppressed and exploited masses. It could not find the way by itself. Nor would it travel the only way to its professed goal, even when it was initiated. Ever since the Congress assumed the leadership of the revolutionary mass movement against imperialism, the only way of developing the movement through successive stages to final victory was pointed out to it time and again. But it wouldn't go that way. The result has been that it has inevitably led a revolutionary movement, through a series of preventable defeats, into a blind alley of utter political bankruptcy which position of disgrace and discredit it seeks to hide in a cloud of demagogic verbiage and pseudo-radical gestures.

The earnest fighters of national freedom, however, can no longer have any illusion about the trend of Congress leadership to the great detriment of the cause of freedom. The Congress has definitely left the stormy road of mass struggle against imperialism. It never took up the struggle against imperialism seriously with a clear revolutionary purpose; with a firm determination that only results from such a purpose. Nevertheless, under the force of circumstances beyond its control it identified itself with the mass movement and, in spite of the subjective predilections of its leaders, did make some contribution to the mobilization of popular energy and awakening of a vague national consciousness. Therein lies the historic significance of the Congress. But the Congress has finished whatever contribution it could make, encumbered with the anti-revolutionary cult of Gandhism. The Gandhist weapons of non-cooperation and civil disobedience have broken on the stone walls of Gandhist philosophy. With all their defects they were partially useful as levers for developing a mass agitation under the given conditions in India. And precisely for that reason, they contained in themselves the germs of their own negation. If these forms of mass movement were seriously undertaken and unswervingly led, they were sure to burst the bounds of Gandhism and break out into higher and more effective forms of anti-imperialist struggle with a homogeneous class composition, a clear social orientation, a definite revolutionary purpose, and a firm will to victory. Every time the Congress launched non-cooperation or civil disobedience it headed dangerously towards such a revolutionary direction. Imperialism helped the Gandhist Congress leadership out of the uncomfortable situation by defeating and disintegrating the movement. But a mass movement, brought about by objective factors and potentially reinforced by steady maturing of those factors of revolutionary ferment, cannot be crushed by repression. It can be held back for some time, but cannot be forever. It recovers from a defeat with renewed vigour. Therefore, the Congress could not indefinitely preach civil disobedience and rein in the forces of revolution that rose in response to its call. Finally, it has extricated itself out of the dilemma. It has definitely rejected even the effective form of mass struggle that it tolerated half-heartedly. Implementing a resolution of the Working Committee (Delhi, Jan. 1935), the president of the Congress issued the following directions regarding the observation of the Independence Day. 'On this day we remind ourselves that we shall not rest until the goal (of Purna Swaraj) is realized. For realizing it we shall, with the best of our power, observe Truth and Non-violence in thought, speech and act, and we shall be ready to make the greatest sacrifice. Having taken the vow of Truth and Non-violence, we shall endeavour; 1. to establish heartfelt unity among different communities; 2. to promote the spirit of equality disregarding caste and religion; 3. to preach temperance; 4. to make propaganda for *charkha* and village industry; 5. to end untouchability; 6. to serve the crores of our hungry countrymen; 7. to do other national and constructive works. It is desired that the day is spent in constructive work taking firm resolution to try for Purna Swaraj'.[4]

'Purna Swaraj' is no longer a political programme. It has become a principle to be realized through ethical purity. The Congress has reverted to the position of 1921 when the Mahatma preached purification of soul as the only way to Swaraj, Swaraj being a mental state. The people are to make firm determination, but to give up all political activity. Besides, the masses are not counted among the followers of the Congress to whom the directions are addressed. 'The crores of hungry countrymen' are to be served by the élite of crusaders out of pity. They are not to be led into the struggle for the conquest of bread and freedom. The army thus disdainfully dismissed from active service, and treated as helpless object of compassion, the general staff can but sink in the depth of impotence, giving up the fight for freedom. The vow of Truth and Non-violence clears Congress of all political significance, and reduces it to an order of *tapaswees* given to futile social service. Even the vow to serve the hungry is mere verbal declaration, because it is not accompanied by a concrete programme of action. To guarantee the hungry crores against starvation, it is necessary to end the rapacious system of colonial exploitation: the overthrow of foreign imperialism is a prelude to a great social revolution. But this cannot be done by an organization which forbids its followers to act, and enjoins it to wish and pray instead. The potentially revolutionary forces gathered under the Congress flag are to be in political inaction.

Gandhism has committed political suicide; yet its ghost haunts the nationalist movement paralysing the forces of revolution, patronizing the policy of seeking compromise with imperialism on the best available terms.

Revolutionary nationalists! Earnest fighters for freedom! If you still do not realize whither the Congress is leading you, listen to your leaders who have ordered you to sit with folded arms or ply *charkha* and dull your restless spirit with the new reactionary device of promoting village industries, and allow them to overwhelm the demon of imperialism in the peaceful, respectable, and constitutional atmosphere of pseudo-parliamentarism. Mr Aney, a former president of the Congress Working Committee, a non-conformist stalwart of Gandhism, introducing in the Legislative Assembly the much advertised motion to censure the Government for its repressive policy, declared that the Congressmen had entered the sanctum of Parliament not to defile it but to offer cooperation. He passionately appealed to imperialism to grasp the hand extended to it. What is still more illuminating and ominous is that Mr Aney rose to impeach repression with the declaration that repression was necessary sometimes. Even blind faith and the cult of hero-worship cannot obscure the meaning of this declaration by an outstanding Congress leader. The Congress leadership has not only left the way of revolutionary mass struggle—the only way to national freedom—they are eager to cooperate with imperialism in order to stem the rising tide of revolution. Through their acredited spokesmen, the Gandhist leaders of the Congress appeal to imperialism. Don't repress us, we have parted company with the popular forces of revolt and are eager to join hands with you to fight the common danger of revolution; arm us, give us some political power, the substance of independence, and we shall ourselves undertake the duty of repressing those who disturb the atmosphere of law and order, so congenial for the health and prosperity of the propertied classes, foreign as well as native.

If you still have any illusion about the character of the Gandhist leaders of the Congress, and the 'freedom' they will give you, hear what a backbencher said in another connection. It was a member from Bengal; not being a responsible leader he was reckless in his pronouncement and tactlessly revealed the secret road from Gandhism to Fascism. With great patriotic fervour he delcared that under an Indian viceroy India would tolerate more repressive laws, would gladly carry greater burden of taxation. It is incredible that people professing to fight for freedom should make such shameless confessions of their real faith. But it is true, nonetheless. According to a proclamation of the General Secretary of the Congress, its parliamentary activities would be on the lines of Mussolini and Hitler.

You can have the benefit of hearing still another authoritative Congress spokesman, in the debate on Aney's motion, Mr Satyamurthy, offering the Government cooperation. Indeed, the Parliamentary Board, which has replaced the orthodox Working Committee as the virtual leader of the Congress, believe neither in non-cooperation nor in civil disobedience. It came to power in Congress politics in consequence of the victory of the right wing which rose in revolt against the futility of those discredited forms of struggle. The Mahatma graciously laid down the role of political dictator and cheerfully buried his pet hatchet, so that the right wing leaders may extricate Congress from the morass of political bankruptcy through the adoption of a pragmatic policy. The new policy, starting from the repudiation of revolutionary mass action, commits the Congress to eventual cooperation, that is, compromise with imperialism.

The Congress entered the Legislative Assembly expressly with the purpose of rejecting the White Paper scheme of constitutional reforms. In the Assembly the Congress Party has been converted to the doctrine of gradual constituional progress all but in name. The vote for Jinnah's amendment is tantamount to acceptance of the self-arrogated right of the British Parliament to frame the Constitution for India. The amendment of the Congress Party rejected by the Assembly was a smokescreen for the retreat represented by the support given to Jinnah's motion which clearly accepts the prerogative of the British Parliament and commits all voting for it to work the reforms provided the Parliament would improve it in detail. The political meaning of the parliamentary manoeuvre is palpable to all but the naïve. Representatives of the Indian upper classes joined hands with the Government in throwing out the Congress amendment. For that act they were rewarded by the Congress support to their policy of coming to terms with imperialism as best as possible. In the Assembly debate on the Joint Parliamentary Report, the Government spokesman challenged the Congress Party to declare that they would not work the reforms. The challenge was not taken up. No such declaration was made. That silence was significant.

The policy of the Congressmen is so clear that the entry of the Congressmen in Provincial Governments under the new Constitution is generally considered to be a foregone conclusion.

From non-cooperation to His Imperial Majesty's constitutional (if not loyal) opposition—that is the road the Congress leaders have already travelled. The completion of the next stage will see them proudly functioning as administrators of fraudulent self-government granted graciously by the Imperialist masters of India. If in those days of 'victory' the Congress will still be under the domination of the Aneys and the incipient Fascist elements in its ruling circle, then heaven help poor India. Let the nationalist revolutionaries beware of the danger of that position which looms ominously within a measurable distance. Quick development of the anti-imperialist forces in the Congress rank as well as in the country at large is the only guarantee against the coming disaster—bloody suppression of the Indian revolution by the patriotic native upper classes armed by foreign imperialism. The development can be quickened only by making the anti-imperialist democratic forces conscious of their social revolutionary role. Under the given conditions of the country, class struggle is the basic feature of the struggle for national freedom. The way to victory in the struggle against imperialism is the development of class struggle. Unless you are ready to carry through the historically necessary social revolution, political freedom will never be attained. The oppressed and exploited masses being the forces irresconcilably antagonistic to imperialist domination, the struggle for national freedom must coincide with the struggle for the social emanicipation of the toiling masses. A party that does not consciously stand for the welfare of the masses as against the privileges of the upper classes and carry on incessant struggle to promote the welfare, is incapable of leading the movement for national freedom to victory. The future of the nation as a whole will have precedence over the present fortunate few who constitute a vociferous minority of the nation. No nation can prosper and progress as long as the productive masses constituting its overwhelming majority languish in economic bankruptcy, social stagnation, intellectual backwardness, cultural reaction.

The argument 'Let us have political freedom first, then we shall look after the interests of the masses' serves the purpose of tolerating and approving the exploitation of the masses at present. But we do not reproach the Congress leadership for this social orientation. That is their business. They may think it is expedient to follow the policy that they have been following. They may be sincere in their profession of concern for the masses to postpone the struggle for the redress of the grievances of the masses until after the attainment of political freedom or it may be an honest blunder on their part. What we want to point out to the revolutionary nationalists is that this mistake, granted its honesty, has brought the struggle for freedom to its present plight—on the verge of abject capitulation before imperialist arrogance and a base compromise with it. The postponement of the struggle advocating partial demands of the masses has meant indefinite postponement of national freedom. The goal of national freedom would have been nearer, if not reached, by now, had the Congress followed the policy of developing the revolutionary consciousness and fighting power of the masses by leading in the struggle for enforcing immediate concrete economic demands of the masses. Under the Gandhist leadership, the Congress did not follow that line. It must discard this anti-revolutionary leadership if it is to become a fighting organ of the struggle against imperialism.

Note

[4] For the actual text of the Congress Working Committee resolution, B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian Nation Congress (1985–1935)*. Madras 1935, p. 1005–6.

SNR.

IV Theory and Practice of Gandhism

1. The present plight of the movement for national freedom is the result of Gandhism. Had not the Congress rank and file blindly believed the Mahatma, the leaders would not be able to liquidate the revolutionary struggle against imperialism. As a matter of fact, the present policy of the Congress is the logical outcome of Gandhism. Has not the Mahatma himself delivered the leadership of the Congress to the Parliamentary Board. Had he not advised the orthodox to suspend all political activity and follow him in the quixotic campaign against untouchability, and other utopian exploits composing the famous but futile 'constructive programme'? Has he not advocated such amendments of the constitution of the Congress as places it under the dictatorship of the right wing leaders, closely connected with the upper classes and makes it immune to mass pressure from below? Has he not witheld his blessing from the Congress Socialist Party which feebly and falteringly raises the voice of the radical elements in the Congress ranks? Has he not time and again denounced class struggle, that is, the striving of the exploited masses to free themselves from the intolerable and demoralizing conditions of serfdom and wage-slavery? Has he not discountenanced, even condemned mass action on the part of the workers and peasants in support of such minimum demands as living wage, tolerable conditions of labour, lower rent, etc.? Has he not time and again advised the workers to accept reduction of their starvation wages on the plea that such sacrifices must be made for the prosperity of the (capitalist) industry?

2. Yet the Mahatma is generally painted as the champion of the poor. The fact however is that it is under the personal guidance of Gandhi that the Congress refused to develop the revolutionary ferment against imperialism by supporting the revolt of the workers and peasants against capitalist exploitation and feudal spoliation. In the beginning of the non-cooperation with the Raj there would be no rent and taxes to pay. That showed to all, who wanted to see the reality of the situation, what the masses were hankering for. They have their own notion of Swaraj, which is neither the metaphysical paradise of Gandhi's imagination nor the dictatorship of the Indian bourgeoisie coveted by the Parliamentary Board. For the masses, Swaraj means alleviation of the miseries of life. The Congress under the guidance of the Mahatma would not suffer its spiritual ideal of freedom to be soiled by the material appetite of the masses. Therefore a year after the peasant masses had begun gathering enthusiastically around the Congress flag with the fond hope that under Swaraj there would be no rent and taxes to pay, the Congress, at the

behest of its saintly dictator, decreed that the peasants should not withhold the payment of rent. The notorious Bardoli resolution, which was a stab on the back of the devoted masses, declared its goodwill towards the landlords and reassured the pillars of imperialism of the support of the Congress against the exploited peasantry. It is a memorable fact of history that the Bardoli resolution was much more effective than the Government repression in damping the spirit of mass revolt. It took the mass movement a number of years to survive the cruel blow dealt at its infancy by its own leaders. In the intervening slump the Congress drifted towards cooperation on the basis of a compromise which was frustrated by the timely resurgence of the mass movement. It should be remembered that the Swaraj Party, which like the present Parliamentary Board, received the blessings of the Mahatma and swallowed up the Congress from which it had split away, interpreted Swaraj as Dominion Status, asked for the Round Table Conference, and pledged itself programmatically to defend the privileges of the landed aristocracy which was praised as the pillar of Indian society and culture. The experience of the Swaraj Party proves that whenever it frees itself from the entangling association with the revolutionary mass movement, the Congress abandons the struggle against imperialism. The upper classes are incapable and unwilling to conduct such a struggle.

3. In 1930 and 1931, India again became the scene of an incipient peasant revolt.[5] The heavy fall in agricultural prices ruined the peasantry. They could not meet their obligations. In that situation they welcomed the no-rent campaign launched by the Congress. The situation was pregnant with revolutionary possibilities. Defeat could be easily avoided by clever tactics—by conducting the movement, in the earlier stages, with partial demands. The Congress as a whole was reluctant to issue the 'No-rent' slogan. The Mahatma was opposed to it on the ground that the movement will become violent. He diverted popular attention by the theatrical spectacle of 'salt war'. The agrarian crisis, however, was acute. The first signs of peasant revolt broke out in the United Provinces. The pressure of mass discontent forced the hands of the Provincial Congress Committee. But while the masses were advancing towards revolutionary struggle with imperialism, and forcing the Congress to assume the leadership, the Mahatma, on his personal responsibility, signed the Delhi Pact which was a deed of capitulation on the part of the Congress. Having taken that step towards 'peace'—that was buying peace at any price—Gandhi ordered the peasant to discharge his obligations to the landlords. Those really concerned with the welfare of the masses cannot forget the ukase that the Mahatma issued from Simla, on the eve of his departure to London, to attend the second Round Table Conference.

4. Instances of the Mahatma supporting the capitalists, openly or under cover of moral sermon and sentimental slob, as against the

workers, are numerous, the latest being his advice to the Ahmedabad workers to accept the wage cut. His letter to the workers giving the advice contains a clear statement of the Mahatma's view about the relation between capital and labour. According to it, the claim to profit is just as moral as the workers' claim to the wages. The saintly heart is big enough to accommodate both capital and labour which are declared to be equally necessary. This is a very familiar defence of capitalism; and a defence of capitalism does not become 'socialism' when put by a saint. Justification of the exploitation of labour by the parasitic owners of the means of production ill fits the professed concern for the welfare of the poor. Besides, for the poor it is not a revolutionary sentiment. As a matter of fact, humanitarianism is a counter-revolutionary cult. Some of the greatest exploiters of labour are noted humanitarians. Pity and charity demoralize the poor, make them grateful to their exploiters, and discourages the spirit of revolt. Therefore they are not noble virtues but sinister instruments for the subtle defence of the system of exploitation of man by man. Humanitarianism is an adjunct of capitalism. Its purpose is to blunt the edge of exploitation to kill by kindness. In short, there is nothing new in [the] Gandhist attitude towards capitalism. The demonstrative hostility to industrialism is reactionary. The alternative proposed is also reactionary as well as utopian. Gandhi rejects capitalism when it is not there. Once it is established he recognizes its right to make profit and exploit the workers for that purpose. Hostility to capitalism is revolutionary when it is expressed in action for the overthrow of the established system in favour of a classless society. Gandhi's is not such a hostility. As a revolutionary force, capitalism finds in him an enemy, but he is its apologist and defender when it is established as an agency of exploitation.

5. The Mahatma's social affiliation was proclaimed without any ambiguity in an interview given to one journalist. Delivering himself against the bogey of class war, the saintly patron of the masses became positively fierce. Concern for the safety of feudal reaction, doomed to disappear under the impact of the imminent revolution, compels the prophet of non-violence to disregard his pet creed and declare that if ever attempt would be made to confiscate by violence the property of the princes and landlords, he would defend them by all means. To resist confiscation by violence one must practice violence. This the Mahatma would do to defend the privileged position of the most parasitic class sucking the blood of the majority of the Indian people, and thereby obstructing national progress and prosperity. Yet the struggle for national freedom has been emasculated and driven into a vicious circle of negations through adherence to the cult of non-violence preached by its saintly dictator. This would be difficult to believe unless such practice resulted logically from the theory of Gandhism. It can be reasonably

assumed that the Mahatma would do no less to capitalism in danger. It is no wonder that under such a champion, [the] Indian masses should have advanced so little towards freedom. They must have other leaders. They should not hail from upper classes as Messiahs; they should grow out of the masses—in the form of an anti-imperialist, social revolutionary party; consciously revolutionary vanguard of the toiling masses.

6. All reactionary acts and pronouncements of Gandhi are justified by his admirers on the specious plea that the Mahatma has discovered a new road of human progress—the road of peaceful revolution. But the basic creed of Gandhism—non-violence—is a reactionary cult. As a matter of fact, the cult of non-violence is defence of actual violence. Class domination—exploitation of man by man—is a system of violence. Real enemies of violence should advocate the end of this system by all means. The apostle of non-violence, on the contrary, would practice violence in the defence of a system based on violence. The doctrine of non-violence represents [a] negation of the historic necessity of revolution. Saddled with this doctrine, the Congress naturally has abandoned the struggle against imperialism. No less an authority than the General Secretary of the Congress has publicly declared whether the Congress is under the guidance of Gandhism. In a letter published in the *Statesman* (weekly edition, 31 January 1935) he wrote,

> If India is to hold her own in any field of activity, revolutionary changes will certainly be necessary. Gandhiji is reported to have said that if the government helped him, he would work miracle . . . In plain political language, what he wanted to say is that if the All India Village Industries Association had the full and sympathetic support and cooperation of the Government he would work a revolution. Revolution need not come through fire and sword, nor need it come through non-cooperation or civil disobedience. It may come even through Government help and cooperation. None will be more glad than Gandhiji, essentially a man of peace, if it came through Government help and cooperation. He had said on many occasions that he was dying for cooperation, and his non-cooperation was for the sole purpose that honourable cooperation may be possible. If true and genuine cooperation can be brought about with the help of the Government it would be a miracle, in the modern language a revolution. If the Government wanted to put life into those old and effete methods of constitutionalism, let them give full effect to the resolutions carried by the representatives of the people in the New Assembly. That is the way of reasonable argument and cooperation. That is the way to kill civil disobedience. The other way by which it can be killed is a violent revolution,, disastrous in its effect both on the people and the Government.

7. This is 'forceful argument for constitutional method', as the organ of imperialism commented editorially. This also amounts to the declaration that the country is heading to a revolution, the masses are getting conscious of the historic necessity for a revolutionary change, but we,

Gandhist leaders of the Congress, don't want a revolution; we appeal to the Government to give us an opportunity to cooperate with it in heading off this imminent catastrophe; let the Government beware of the danger and take our advice. The Gandhist leadership of the Congress identify the welfare of the Indian people with the interests of imperialism, and consider revolution to be equally dangerous for both. Obviously, they take the privileges for the upper classes for the welfare of the whole nation; because that is certainly menaced by revolution together with the system of colonial exploitation. Civil disobedience—the mass movement developing under the Congress flag—is an expression of the socio-political discontent of the masses. The Gandhist leaders are anxious to liquidate it, and are eagerly appealing to the Government for help that will enable them to do so. They have already gone a long way by themselves. But unless the Government helped the leaders, the mass movement is likely to transcend the narrow limits of civil disobedience and develop into a revolutionary outbreak against foreign imperialism and native reaction.

8. This shameless readiness to join hands with imperialism to head off the danger of revolution is explained by a novel theory of revolution—which falsifies history and negatives revolution itself. The handy but utterly unconvincing explanation is found in the doctrine of non-violence. The Gandhist would set an example to the world. They would make a bloodless revolution—make omelettes without breaking eggs.

9. In the same letter quoted above, the General Secretary of the Congress wrote:

> Only in vulgar, uninformed, half-educated minds, is the word revolution identified with a violent and bloody change. The real meaning of the term is any great change in the standards and values in the life of a portion of humanity. The change in Europe from medievalism to modernism is called revolution. It does not mean that it was brought about with fire and sword. It only means that the values of medieval Europe changed, and new values were embodied in new institutions. These institutions compared with the old were revolutionary.

10. There cannot be any doubt about the nature of the Gandhist revolution when we are told by these novel brand of 'revolutionaries' that it can be accomplished with the aid of imperialism. It cannot be conceived except as a 'miracle', because a bloodless revolution is a miracle. Nothing like that happened in history. The Gandhists cannot falsify history to fit into their cast of mind simply by abusing the honest, straightforward, bold revolutionaries as 'vulgar, uninformed, half-educated'. These epithets are more applicable to those that maintain against the evidence of history familiar to the schoolboy, that the change in Europe from medievalism to modernism happened peacefully. Of course, the essential thing is the change itself, not how it was brought

about, and the change, and not the methods of enforcing it, is the revolution. But the method is a decisive factor. It is a historical truth that the change could never be brought about without fire and sword. Revolutions are inseparably associated with violence, and if you insist on non-violent methods, you will have to do without the revolution however necessary it is and however sincerely you may desire it. The cult of non-violence drives the Gandhist to the absurd and compromising position of maintaining that a revolutionary change in the economic conditions of the masses of India can be brought about with the aid of imperialism. This dangerous illusion is born of the philosophy of Gandhism. Therefore, dominated by this philosophy, the Congress could not possibly lead the anti-imperialist struggle to victory. The fact that the social ideals of Gandhism are realizable, admittedly with the cooperation of imperialism, that it to say, within the framework of colonial economy that has ruined the Indian masses, this very fact proves that they are not revolutionary ideals.

11. Revival of village industries, for example, is not a revolution. Granted that the revival is possible—(it is not)—then there will be no radical change in the structure of Indian society. If realized, the change would be retrograde, from quasi-modernism to full-fledged medievalism. But Gandhism is opposed to any radical social transformation. Revolution as conceived by it is anything but revolution, as historically understood. The practice of Gandhism enables one to see that when the Gandhists talk of 'revolution' they mean reaction; and for the defence of reaction, to maintain the privileges of the propertied classes, Gandhism would practice violence. The Mahatma has made this clear. Besides that dogma of non-violence represents sanction of violence committed by the exploiting classes, the very existence of these being based on violence.

12. Gandhism confused the social outlook of the Congress rendering it unable to differentiate the forces of national revolution from the potential, even active, allies of imperialism. Gandhism incapacitated the Congress to pursue the policy of developing the struggle against imperialism through sharpening the class struggle. Gandhism forbade the Congress to recognize the reality of the class struggle. Gandhism obliged the Congress to turn its back on the source of its own strength, and emasculated itself in consequence. Gandhism has finally driven the Congress to Parliamentary chauvinism as a step towards compromise with imperialism. In any case Gandhism has landed the Congress into political bankruptcy. The Gandhist leaders of the Congress may talk loud, but their utter inability to conduct an effective struggle against imperialism is proved beyond doubt.

13. The forces of national liberation must be rescued from this inept, discredited leadership. They must repudiate Gandhism. They must be conscious of their revolutionary social character. They must be free from

entangling alliances with the patriots of pocket. They must have a clearly revolutionary ideology, a progressive outlook, a concrete programme. Revolution means destruction of the established socio–political order. It is a dangerous illusion—incredible nonsense—to hold that the established system of oppression and exploitation can be persuaded to liquidate itself. This applies to foreign imperialism as well as to native reaction, represented by princes, landlords and capitalists. These can be no more induced to be good and kind fathers to the toiling masses on whose ruin they thrive than imperialism can be persuaded to help the Mahatma to cure the poverty of the Indian people.

14. The Mahatma sits on the shoulders of the forces of national revolution like the old man of the sea, paralysing their power to think by blind faith, dampening their will to fight by transforming the nationalist politics into a mystic, metaphysical cult. Gandhism has become a burdensome ballast on the forces of freedom. It must be realized once for all that Gandhism is not the Congress; Gandhism is not nationalism. In order to survive the crisis it has got involved in, under the inspired guidance of the Mahatma, Congress must be a militant mass organization. To undergo such a transformation, it must have a clearly defined programme of national democratic revolution, and a new leadership that can guide it in the struggle for the realization of the programme. Nationalism, that is the striving of the oppressed and exploited masses to be free from imperialism, is a revolutionary movement. Gandhism is a reactionary cult. If the Congress wants to serve as the organ of the national democratic revolution, it must revolutionize itself—in ideology, social orientation, programme, leadership, and method of combat.

Note

[5] On the eve of the Salt Satyagraha Gandhi had declared that 'Civil Disobedience, once begun this time, cannot be stopped and must not be stopped so long as there is a single civil resister left free or alive.' The government responded to Non-cooperation with a series of Ordinances, large-scale arrests, lathi charges, shootings, and a reign of terror. A most valuable contemporary account of the situation is contained in *Condition of India 1932*: *Report of the India League Delegation*, London, published with a preface by Bertrand Russell in 1934. During 1932–3, 'nearly 120, 000 persons, including several thousand women and quite a number of children, have been arrested and imprisoned' (President-elect Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's speech). And in April 1934 Gandhi decided to suspend Civil Disobedience which was officially terminated on 20 May, and the decision of the newly revived Swarajya Party to take part in the forthcoming election was fully approved. Sitaramayya, *History of the INC*; R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, *Vol. II*, Calcutta, 1963. SNR.

V. The Congress Socialist Party

1. We welcome the rise of the Congress Socialist Party as a hopeful symptom of the situation. It indicates that the forces of national democratic revolution are beginning to move towards the necessary internal revolution. It is a tendency in the right direction. But it has made a false start. Unless the initial mistake is rectified forthwith, the movement will prove sterile. The mistake has been to start sailing under a false colour.[6] The Congress Socialist Party has foredoomed itself to failure having undertaken an impossible task. It proposes to persuade the Congress to adopt a socialist programme. This proposition presupposes the Gandhist faith that social transformasion, or even transfer of political power, can be brought about by persuasion. Otherwise, how could you expect the National Congress to adopt the socialist programme? Socialism is the programme of a particular class—the proletariat. The National Congress is not a proletariat organization. It is not meant to be so. As it is, the Congress embraces in the folds, and is connected with, landowning and capitalist classes. While drawing its strength from the semi-proletarian lower middle-class, it is dominated by the representatives of the propertied classes. Being thus constituted and led, it can never accept a programme of real socialism. Even if its social base is widened, and the leadership is democratized, shifting to the left, even then its class character will not be such as will make a socialist programme acceptable to it. To perform the function of an organ of the struggle for national freedom, the Congress must be a coalition of classes. The proletariat, as the most revolutionary class, must enter into the coalition—the coalition, nevertheless, is only for the attainment of the common goal of national freedom. To serve as an effective instrument for the realization of this goal, the Congress must necessarily be the coalition of classes irreconcilably antagonistic to imperialism. At any rate, the social basis of the coalition must be made largely of those classes; its programme must reflect the interests of those classes; its leadership must be identified with those classes. Other social elements, partially antagonistic to imperialism, may be admitted into the coalition; but they must take a subsidiary part; they must not be allowed to dominate the coalition, as is the case at present. For, in that case, owing to the fact that their interests are not altogether irreconcilable with imperialism, the coalition is sure to narrow down to a political instrument in the hand of those classes, and tend towards a compromise with imperialism in order to safeguard their sectional interests to the detriment of the national welfare. Today, the Congress is well-advanced in this dangerous direction.

2. The classes constituting the implacable enemy of imperialism all belong to the oppressed and exploited majority of the nation, composed of the workers, peasants, artisans, small traders, employees, poor students, lower middle-class intellectuals. The National Congress must be, not in name, but actually, a fighting alliance of those classes—consequently, its programme must be the programme of revolutionary nationalism—of democratic revolution. In addition to the overthrow of imperialism, this programme must include the establishment of a really democratic state under which political power will be really vested in and actually exercised by the majority; it will further include abolition of feudalism, landlordism, and other reactionary social institutions that impede free economic development of the country; it will also include specific measures guaranteeing the producing masses against unlimited exploitation by the owners of the means of exploitation; in short, it will visualize such a democratization of the economic life of the country; such a diffusion of the national wealth as will promote a rapid expansion of the forces of production and raise the standard of living of the masses.

3. This is a revolutionary programme; but it is not the programme of socialism. It will revolutionize property but it will not abolish private ownership. And the Congress as a coalition of the classes cannot adopt a more radical programme. The immediate task of all revolutionaries, including socialists and communists, is to strive for the acceptance of this programme by the Congress, and for the broadening of its social basis, revolutionizing its ideology and change of its leadership necessary for the purpose.

4. If the Congress Socialist Party proposes to undertake this task, it is making a start in the right direction, but under a false colour. It has chosen a misleading nomenclature. The sooner this ill-chosen label is dropped, the better. It will not help but hinder the accomplishment of the task. The democratic, national revolution should be fought out as such. It is a historic necessity. It need not be ashamed of itself and paint itself fraudulently in pale pink. If, on the other hand, the Congress Socialist Party, wants to be a socialist party, that is, the party of the proletariat, then it cannot expect to perform the miracle it proposes to do. Should it persist in this utopian venture, it will have to abandon socialism, except in name, because the Congress, even reorganized as a revolutionary, democratic mass movement cannot subscribe to a socialist programme. Its very social composition will preclude that under the given conditions of the country; the peasantry will be the major factor in the movement; and the peasants do not love socialism. They want to own the land they cultivate. Creating a class of peasant proprietors is not socialism. As a matter of fact, peasant proprietorship offers a solid basis for the growth of capitalism, unless there are countervailing factors. Other oppressed classes, though more or less proletarianized, do not take

to socialism any more kindly than the peasantry. They also hanker after property, and are actually associated with some decayed forms of it. It is true that the economic salvation of these quasi-proletarian oppressed classes as well as of the peasantry is in socialism. But they will have to be led gradually in that direction. In India the way lies through the struggle for the realization of the programme of the democratic national revolution. Experience gained in that struggle will drive the semi-proletarian masses towards socialism. The revolutionary democratic state will serve as the instrument for directing that process.

5. For the Congress, as it is constituted and led at present, acceptance of a socialist programme is altogether out of the question. All the leaders, including the Mahatma himself, have made their position clear in this respect. They don't hide their hostility to the proposition of the Socialist Party. Class-struggle is their bugbear; and the creed of non-violence is their convenient excuse.[7] But the socialist programme arises from the reality of class-struggle, and the creed of non-violence is meant to tie the hands of the exploited so that they go down in the class-struggle not of their own creation. Of course, the Gandhist leaders of the Congress express their lip-sympathy for socialism; otherwise it would be impossible to pose as the champions of the poor. But they put their own interpretation on socialism. Their socialism is identical with Gandhism; and we have exposed the true colour of Gandhist humanitarianism. Let the Socialist Party raise Gandhism to the status of socialism, and the Congress leaders would patronize its programme. This is how the Socialist Party can attain its utopian object. The Congress, as it is today, might accept a 'socialist programme', if this will have nothing of socialism in it; such a programme, on the contrary, will be a reactionary programme of reversal to medievalism or a programme of capitalist dictatorship thinly veiled by sundry items of charity and social service. The 'socialist programme', that the Gandhists would endorse should fall far short of, indeed would be antagonistic to, the programme of a democratic revolution. Thus it would block the way to socialism; because democratic revolution is a necessary step towards socialism. In short, 'National Socialism' is the brand of socialism acceptable to Gandhists, and 'National Socialism' is neither national nor socialist. It is a pseudonym for Fascism—reactionary nationalism; the bloodiest form of capitalism.

6. Granted that the Congress Socialist Party intends to free the Congress from its present leadership as a condition for the acceptance of the socialist programme; the creation of this necessary condition presupposes the advocacy of the programme of democratic national revolution. The present leadership can be overthrown only by the appearance of an alternative leadership risen out of the rank and file revolt. This revolt can be promoted and reinforced through the mobilization of

larger masses in the anti-imperialist struggle, only in one way. That is the advocacy of a programme reflecting the interests, immediate as well as remote, of all the classes comprising the oppressed and exploited masses. That is not a programme of socialism. Those who sincerely want socialism, should not try to find a shortcut. In the attempt to discover it, they will only land in a strange atmosphere, not at all congenial to socialism. Let the Congress Socialist Party beware of the danger. If you don't retrace your steps taken under false colours, you are sure to end either in stultification or Fascism. The utopian belief in the possibility of converting non-proletarian classes to socialism will compel you to abandon socialism for a caricature of it. Don't try the impossible. Concentrate your revolutionary energy on tasks that can be accomplished, and must be accomplished. Transform the Congress into a militant mass organization: instrument of uncompromising struggle against imperialism, organ of democratic national revolution. Free it from the Gandhist ideology which has paralysed its power to fight, and persuaded it to become an instrument for furthering the sectional interests of the upper classes. Overthrow its Gandhist leadership which has landed it into political bankruptcy and practically destroyed it as a mass movement. Give it an alternative leadership able to reinvigorate it with a clearly revolutionary vision, and guide it in the struggle for freedom. Place before it a clearly revolutionary and concretely defined programme of democratic national revolution: the only programme that can be realized by a democratic alliance of the classes oppressed and exploited by imperialism.

7. This is the historic task of the radical democratic elements in the nationalist ranks whose incipient revolt against the Congress leadership is embodied in the formation of the Congress Socialist Party. The accomplishment of this task will prepare the ground for further advance towards socialism. In the course of the struggle for the accomplishment of this task of the moment, the socialist tendency of the more radical elements among revolutionary nationalists will be clarified. Today it is largely utopian, with no ideological clarity. This weakness manifests itself in the illusion of persuading the Congress to adopt a socialist programme. Having overcome this weakness, those with socialist tendency will find their way to a revolutionary party of the proletariat. Thus the Congress Socialist Party is a superfluity. If it does not disappear as it is bound to, on the one hand, it will impede the development of the genuine tendency, and on the other, the task of quickening the struggle against imperialism will be neglected.

8. The immaturity and ideological backwardness of the socialist tendency among the more radical Congressmen are evidenced by the choice of the term 'socialist' for the new party. Today socialism means almost anything. As long as the nature of the goal remains vague or

subject to spurious interpretations, it is not necessary to agree regarding the road to it. But no such confusion is possible for those who define socialism as the abolition of private property in the means of production, distribution, and exchange. This can be captured by the seizure of political power by the working class; and for this purpose, the established government must be overthrown.

9. Originally, socialist parties rose in the advanced capitalist countries with this purpose. Eventually they deviated from the path of revolution, and the generally accepted socialist programme came to be gradual and peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism through the instrumentality of the democratic state.[8] Today it is very well known what has happened to the socialist parties. They all gave up the struggle for socialism and degenerated into futile reformism. They have betrayed the working class and become apologists, even active defenders of capitalism and the bourgeois parliamentary state. It is a bitter lesson of history that socialist parties, that is, working class parties that reject the path of the revolution, cannot be instruments for the establishment of socialism. Great socialist parties in European countries have signally failed to accomplish the task. Having betrayed the working class for the sake of defending parliamentary democracy, they themselves have been destroyed by Fascism together with parliamentary democracy.[9] The programme of socialism remains still to be realized. But the socialist parties have proved to be utterly inadequate for the purpose. The struggle for the overthrow of capitalism, and the consequent liberation of society from class domination, is today carried on by the Communist Party.

10. Why do the socialistically inclined elements in the Congress choose a discredited flag? Why do they propose to organize a socialist party when experience throughout the world has proved that such a party cannot lead the way to socialism? Is it simple carelessness or is the choice deliberately made?

11. If the name is deliberately chosen, then the Party is committed to a definite line of action. Its object may or may not be socialism as historically understood. But the deliberate selection of the name would imply that the party would not travel the path of revolution. Consequently, it is foredoomed to fail in reaching the goal, as so many others have failed. There is absolutely no ground for the contention that the methods that miscarried in other countries will succeed in India. On the contrary, the methods—of reformist Trade Unionism and Parliamentary gradualism—are hardly applicable under the existing conditions of this country. In short, in India the Socialist Party will be an exotic growth. It cannot strike roots in the soil of this country. Yet in the futile effort, some honest and ardent spirits will be wasting revolutionary energy; development of socialistic tendencies will be impeded; masses may be led away from the path of revolutionary struggle.

12. Comrades of the Congress Socialist Party! If you want to take up the struggle for the liberation of the toiling masses, for ending the system of class domination, why do you commit the mistake of starting under a discredited banner? Why do you, consciously or unconsciously, select a road that is a blind alley? If you mean not to go that way, why do you propose to create an organization that cannot do otherwise? You know that there are others in the country who have for years done the pioneering work for the rise of a party of the working class. If you want what they have been fighting for, why don't you join hands with them? If you propose to fight for real socialism, then we are pursuing the selfsame goal. There is, then, no necessity to have different organizations, unless you prefer to travel a different path. But no path other than that of a revolution will take you to your professed goal. Conscious selection of the name 'Socialist' as against 'Communist', has a distinct political significance which can neither be hidden nor missed. It means negation of the necessity of revolution—of the capture of power by the working class. If you have made the choice deliberately, what else may have been your motive? Perhaps you think that avoidance of the odious name 'Communist' would enable your party to have some freedom of action. This is another illusion. You will be judged by your programme and action. A truly revolutionary party cannot hide its colour behind false labels. We fully appreciate the value of freedom of action. It is silly romanticism to expose our young and inadequate forces to repression, if that can be avoided without falsifying our principle, watering down our programme, and emasculating our action. There are other methods of dodging repression. A revolutionary party, driven underground by repression, can and must devise means for mass activities.

13. It is true that some communists have made such mistakes and behaved so badly as might well have proved repulsive. But no serious person would throw the baby with the bathwater. Besides, there have been other communists, older and more experienced, who have deplored the infantile sickness of their errant comrades, and have been trying to cure it. Our Party is the result of that effort.[10] We fully and firmly stand on the ground of the principles and programme of communism, as defined and formulated by the Communist International, in contrast to the reformism and gradualism of the socialist parties. But we disagree with the tactics of those who have lately been functioning in this country on the authority of the C. I. We have undertaken the task of building up a united party of the working class, definitely committed to the establishment of socialism through revolution. To win over the confidence of the masses and to become an effective factor in the political life of the country, the tactical policy must be framed with due regard for the specific conditions in which it must function. To rally the oppressed and exploited masses in the struggle against imperialism is the immediate task.

To perform this task, we are eager to cooperate and enter into fighting alliance with all the revolutionary democratic national elements. We are particularly eager to cooperate with those representing socialist tendencies in the movement for democratic national freedom. Because, in the course of the struggle, we shall come closer so that the socialist tendency of the radical nationalists will be clarified, to the extent of outgrowing Gandhiism altogether, and go into the strengthening of the revolutionary party of the working class.

14. Comrades of the Congress Socialist Party! Let us stand shoulder to shoulder in the forefront of the army of democratic national revolution. Let us develop a revolutionary left wing inside the Congress to take over the leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle. No use dubbing this movement as 'socialist'. It is not. The left wing leadership of the Congress must stand on the platform of democratic revolution which requires the overthrow of imperialism. The task of the urgently needed radical new leadership of the Congress is not to convert it into socialism, but to transform it into a militant mass organization fighting relentlessly against imperialism. All true socialists and sensible communists should participate in this process of developing the anti-imperialist struggle. By their very nature they will function as the consciously revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat, and as such, they should have their own party which alone can have the programme of socialism. In order that the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat may play its role in the anti-imperialist struggle creditably, there should be one united party. We have undertaken the task of organizing such a united party; we cordially welcome all revolutionary socialists to join us. Together we will perform the task of helping the development of the radical left wing in the Congress to capture its leadership. In the process of its development, socialist tendencies will be clarified, and others will join us in ever increasing numbers. Thus the struggle for national freedom and the party for social emancipation will grow simultaneously. The Congress will not be converted to socialism; it will become an effective instrument in the anti-imperialist movement for democratic freedom and, as such, it will also serve the greater purpose of mobilizing the forces of social revolution and of preparing the ground for the establishment of socialism.

Notes

[6] For a more detailed critique see next section in this volume of Selected Works. SNR.

[7] On 17 June 1934 the Congress Working Committee adopted a resolution which, while welcoming the formation of groups representing different schools of thought, reaffirmed very clearly that confiscation of private property and advocacy of class war were contrary to the creed of the Congress. *India Annual Register*, Calcutta, 1934, Vol. I, p. 300. SNR.

[8] Almost from the beginning the Socialist movement in Europe was divided on the basic issue of relation between socialism and revolution. Marx's principal rival in Germany, Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–64), equated socialism with social democracy and argued that the historic role of the working class was, through universal suffrage, to subject 'the will of the state to the claim of the *whole* of Society' (*The Working Class Programme*, 1862). Lassalle had more followers in Germany than Marx; eventually in 1875 Lassalleans and Marxists combined to form the Sozialdemokratische Partie Deutschlands (SPD). But the differences remained, and Eduard Bernstein (1850–1932) who had served as editor of the SPD's newspaper for seven years and had been a close confidant of Engels, came out with a very clear theoretical formulation of evolutionary socialism in 1899 in his book *Die Voraussetzungen der Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie.* His views were strongly attacked by Marxists, but 'revisionism' gained ground in the socialist parties and movements of western Europe, and the 'evolutionary' view became increasingly influential in the Second International (founded in 1889). To Lenin, socialism was inseparable from revolution, and after the Bolsheviks captured power in Russia and set up the Third International, this view became an essential feature of Marxist–Communist ideology. Although Roy had broken with the Comintern, he did not give up or qualify this orthodox Marxist–Leninist view. *See* Albert Fried and Ronald Sanders, eds., *Socialist Thought, a Documentary History*, Doubleday, New Yerk, 1964; L. Labedz, ed., *Revisionism*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1962. SNR.

[9] In Italy the Socialists had emerged at the general elections in 1919 as the strongest party (156 out of 508 seats, supported by a third of the total of five million votes). But with the Comintern's backing a split occurred in 1921, and the minority formed the Communist Party of Italy. Meanwhile, taking advantage of the dissensions and general unrest, Mussolini and his 'battalions of Combat' were able to destroy, during the strike of July–August 1922, 'the headquarters of socialist, Trade union and communist organizations in 43 cities'. Later that year the Fascists marched on Rome without meeting any effective resistance, and the King was obliged to ask Mussolini to become Premier. Early in 1923 most of the socialist and communist leaders were put under arrest. Thereafter all non-Fascist political parties were driven underground, all opposition newspapers were suppressed, all non-Fascist labour unions were broken up, and Fascist dictatorship established in Italy with Mussolini as Absolute Master.

In Germany both Social Democrates and Communists had strong parties during the twenties, but the Weimar Republic was undermined by the world depression, and taking advantage of the Communist opposition to the Social Democrats and growing unrest in the country, National Socialists under Hitler's leadership became increasingly aggressive and popular. The Socialist appeal to the Communists for 'civil peace' between the two parties was rejected by the latter. In the July 1932 Reichstag election, Social Democrats got 21.6 per cent of total vote, the Communists 14.3 per cent, and the National Socialists 37.3 per cent. Even then the Communists considered not the Nazis but the Social Democrats their principal enemy. After the November 1932 election, President Hindenburg appointed Hitler head of the German government. New elections were held in March 1933 in which the Nazis and their allies won 52 per cent of votes. Thereafter the Weimar democratic constitution was suspended; the Reichstag gave Hitler dictatorial powers, and he almost immediately outlawed the Socialist, the Communist, and other parties, giving the Nazis legal monopoly of power (July 1933).

See A. Rossi, *The Rise of Italian Fascism*, London, 1938; G. A. Borgese, *Goliath, the March of Fascism*, New York, 1937; Konrad Heiden, *Der Fuehrer: Hitler's Rise to Power*, Boston, 1944; Franz Borkenau, *World Communism*, Ann Arbor, 1962; O. K. Flechtheim, *Die KPD in der Weimarer Republik*, Offenbach A. M. 1948. SNR.

[10] Roy is here asking the members of the Congress Socialist Party to join the Revolutionary Party of the Indian Working Class of which this is the Manifesto, and which

he claims to be the true Communist Party of India, instead of forming a separate political organization of their own. If the CSP agreed to come within the fold of RPIWC, the latter's claim for recognition by the Comintern would be so much the stronger. The official CPI, at this stage, was not only illegal but also a very weak organization. Soon it would penetrate the CSP under cover of a united front and seek to capture it.

SNR.

VI The Working Class and the Democratic National Revolution

1. A revolution takes place as historic necessity for the welfare of the whole society. Yet only a particular class plays the leading role in carrying it through. The social task of the revolution determines the class character of the leadership. The leadership devolves on the class whose particular interest happens to coincide, for the time being, with the general welfare of the people involved in the revolution. A particular class becomes the standard-bearer of the revolution, because in the endeavour to further its own particular interest it promotes the welfare of the entire people. In the period of classical bourgeois revolution, 'The Third Estate' abolished the entire stratified system of feudal society in order to liberate itself. Without freeing the peasantry from serfdom the bourgeoisie could not free themselves, could not even remove obstacles in the way of capitalist development. In a later period, the leadership of a higher type of revolution falls upon the proletariat, because the liberation of the working class from capitalist exploitation is conditional upon the abolition of all classes; in other words, the proletariat can free themselves by freeing the entire society.

2. Indian society has not undergone the process of transformation historically known as the *Bourgeois Revolution*. That historically necessary process has still to take place. The tasks of the bourgeois revolution are still to be performed. Normally, the leadership of the impending revolution should belong to the bourgeoisie. But the Indian bourgeoisie did not take the initiative in bringing about the social transformation necessary for general progress as well as for the development of their class; they even failed to assume the leadership of the social revolution when finally this began to manifest itself spontaneously in the form of mass discontent accentuated by colonial exploitation. The upper strata of the nationalist bourgeoisie allied themselves with imperialism at the first signs of revolutionary mass upheaval. The smaller fry hesitatingly tried to utilize the mass movement to further their sectional interests. Even in that they made a pitiful show. The nationalist bourgeoisie as a class has shown itself unable and decidedly unwilling to carry through the overdue bourgeois revolution which is conditional upon the overthrow of imperialism.[11] But the revolution is historically necessary. It must take place under the leadership of a different class—the working class.

3. The debacle of the bourgeoisie is due to the fact that under the given conditions of the country, their class interests do not coincide with

national interests. Today capitalists can thrive in India not only by exploiting the proletariat, but upon the ruin of the peasant and the lower middle-class masses. To be able to hold its own in the fierce, cutthroat competition with advanced industries of other countries, capitalist industry in India must have the advantage of the low cost of production. That means workers must be paid starvation wages for labour performed under intolerable conditions; agricultural prices must be forced down to guarantee a supply of raw materials at the cheapest rates. Protective tariffs, on the other hand, will inflate the price of manufactured goods. The result will be ruin of the peasantry and greater economic burden [of indirect taxation] on the lower middle-class masses. To keep agricultural prices at the lowest possible level, the peasantry must be kept in the hand-to-mouth condition. The present feudal–patriarchal system of landownership, medieval conditions prevailing in the native states, excess of landlordism, exactions of the usurer, all these factors must be preserved for the selfish interests of the native capitalists. Yet, these are the very factors which must be removed for the sake of normal economic development, free expansion of modern industries, a process absolutely necessary to promote the general welfare of the country. Obviously the particular interests of the bourgeoisie is far from being identical with the national interests; one is antagonistic to the other.

4. The basic task of bourgeois revolution is to liberate forces of production from the fetters of feudalism. The bourgeoisie free themselves by freeing the peasantry. In India capitalist industry requires the preservation of feudal and semi-feudal social conditions. Capitalism is a revolutionary agent, as long as it elevates the entire society to a higher economic and cultural level, raises the standard of living of the producing masses. In India capitalism cannot have any revolutionary significance, because it can have a precarious existence only by sinking the masses further in the depths of economic bankruptcy, by functioning as an agency obstructing general social progress. The Indian bourgeoisie do not want to destroy feudalism, although this reactionary social institution, galvanized by imperialism, provides the social base of the ruinous foreign rule. Let alone the upper strata of the bourgeoisie that stand out of the Congress—to its right, as represented politically by the loyal cooperators or the liberals. Even those connected with the Congress are apologists and active defenders of the princes and landlords. It is notorious that under their reactionary influence the Congress would not foment a revolutionary democratic movement in the native states. But it is not generally known that the pernicious scheme of Federation originated in the Congress circles. This scheme would give the autocratic princes power over the people of the whole country, while their own domains would remain untouched by the principle of responsibility. The sponsors of the Federation propose to place the fate of India in the hands

of feudal autocracy when imperialist absolutism will be superficially modified by the coming reforms. Now it is reported that the princes have all along been benefited by the distinguished legal advice of the Congress leader, Bhulabhai Desai, in preparing their demands that, to be acceptable to them, the Federal constitution should clearly legalize their absolute powers in their own domains, while giving them a decisive voice in the affairs of the rest of the country. These are not accidental facts. They reveal the social composition of the radical wing of the nationalist bourgeoisie. Even these are wedded to the feudal reaction. The leadership of the revolution, therefore, even in the bourgeois democratic stage, must go to another class.

5. In this situation the interests of the working class becomes coincident with the general welfare of the people. Overthrow of imperialism is the first condition for the progress and prosperity of the nation. The working class is irreconcilably antagonistic to imperialism, because the entire burden of colonial exploitation ultimately falls on them. Therefore the major role in the struggle for national freedom goes to them. Secondly, rapid development of modern industry is necessary for the growth of the proletariat as a class. Therefore, the working class must take a leading past in the struggle for the elimination of all the reactionary factors obstructing the modernization of national economy. In other words, the proletariat inherits the leadership of the overdue bourgeois revolution to be carried on in the teeth of the bourgeoisie themselves. Thirdly, particular interests of the working class demands the destruction of capitalism which is based upon the system of wage-slavery. On this point again, the interests of the working class coincides with the general interests of the masses of the Indian people. Capitalism in the form of colonial exploitation has ruined India. As native growth it will also have the same effect. Progress and prosperity of the Indian people as a whole demands the end of colonial exploitation; nor can they be realized under native capitalism.

6. Taking place after a great delay, in the epoch of capitalist decay, the bourgeois revolution must directly develop into a proletarian revolution—otherwise it will never be carried out and Indian society will go down the dark way of disintegration travelled by all communities that failed to experience a necessary process of social transformation. This perspective of the Indian revolution determines the role of the working class, even in the earlier stages, in which other social elements will also take [a] prominent part. Peasants, artisans, small traders, employees, poor students, petty-intellectuals—all these are vitally interested in the overthrow of imperialism because they are all ruined by colonial exploitation. They are also concerned with overdue tasks of the bourgeois revolution because they will all be benefited by the modernization of [the] national economy in such a manner as will raise the standard of living of the

masses. But none of them can assume the leadership of the bourgeois revolution abdicated by the bourgeoisie. Under the given conditions of the country, the bourgeois revolution overlaps with the proletarian revolution; and is likely to develop directly into the latter. Therefore, to be successful, it must be led by a class whose interests transcend its achievements, whose vision is not circumscribed by the horizon of a higher form of class society.[12]

7. The respective interests of the various sections of the oppressed masses demand overthrow of imperialism as well as the accomplishment of the tasks of bourgeois revolution. But, in case of none of them, except the proletariat, does the particular interest coincide with general social welfare which require not only the end of colonial exploitation and elimination of native factors impeding modern industrial development, but also freedom from the fetters of capitalist economy. This freedom can be guaranteed only by the class which has absolutely no other relation to capitalism than that of irreconcilable antagonism. This class is the proletariat—that is, the class of people entirely and irrevocably divorced from the ownership of the means of production, possessing nothing but labour power to sell.

8. In so far as the Indian revolution is a bourgeois revolution, it will retain its bourgeois democratic character even after it becomes a proletarian revolution as its basic task is the solution of the agrarian problem. The peasantry are bound to play a major part; in a way, the peasantry are the decisive factor of the Indian revolution. The proletariat will not be able to lead the revolution to success any more than the bourgeoisie could in the classical epoch of bourgeois revolution unless they are followed by the peasant masses. But this does not mean that 'in India, as in other countries, the revolution will come from the village'. The General Secretary of the Congress expressed this opinion by way of defending Gandhi's Village Industrial Association against the criticism of the Congress Socialist Party. As a matter of historical fact, revolution never *came* from the villages; it was *taken there*. Once upon a time, in other countries the bourgeoisie took the banner of revolution to the villages. In India, as in Russia and China, it will be done by the proletariat. The peasantry, of course, rise spontaneously against oppression and exploitation. But revolt is not revolution. The peasantry revolts, thereby indicating the necessity of a revolution, that is radical transformation of the established social relations. But they are not conscious of the profoundly revolutionary significance of their discontent. Their eyes are fixed on immediate objectives. By themselves, they never realize that their welfare requires a revolutionary change. Left to themselves the peasantry can never make a revolution, with all their spontaneous spirit of revolt. History is full of such instances of abortive peasant revolts, some of which, like the peasant war in Germany, for example, were of

gigantic proportions.[13] We have our own experience in India. Ever since the end of the world war the country has been the scene of perennial peasant revolt. On several occasions it broke out openly. But having no leadership either from the bourgeoisie or from the proletariat, the incipient and sporadic peasant revolt developed little in the direction of a consciously revolutionary movement. The leadership has been absent because the bourgeoisie would not (could not) give it and the proletariat were not yet able to step on the scene.

9. No, the revolution will not come from the village. It must be taken there by the proletariat. The village is smouldering with the fire of discontent. It must be touched off. Peasant revolt must be organized into a revolutionary movement. It must be harnessed in the struggle for the realization of a consciously conceived programme of social revolution. To play the leading role creditably and effectively in the movement for national freedom, in the struggle for the modernization and democratization of the life of the country as well as in the ultimate stage of the revolution, the working class must have its own political organization—its own independent party. In the different stages of the revolutionary struggle they will cooperate with all the social elements involved. Organizationally they will enter into the united anti-imperialist front—participate actively in the revolutionary democratic coalition. But they must have their own base of operation. As members of the coalition, the working class will fight for the common interest but it must approach every issue from the point of view of its class; and in that they will be guided by its party—the conscious vanguard of the class. Since their particular interest is coincident with the welfare of the bulk of the nation, such [an] approach will always lead to the solution of the respective problems to general advantage.

Notes

[11] This view of the Indian bourgeoisie, the unaccomplished bourgeois revolution in India, and consequent need for telescoping two historic phases of revolution under prolatarian hegemony was consistenly held by Roy from the time of his debate with Lenin at the Second Congress of the Comintern through *India in Transition* and *The Future of Indian Politics* to *The Manifesto*. See *Selected Works of M. N. Roy, Vols. I & II.* SNR.

[12] In his *Memoirs* Roy subsequently recounted how, in his discussions with Lenin at the time of the Second Congress of the Comintern, he had cited the authority of Plekhanov in support of his own analysis. To him it seemed that what Plekhanov had written about conditions in Russia in the late nineteenth century were applicable to a considerable degree to conditions in India in the first quarter of the twentieth. I am inclined to think that the writings of the founder of the Marxist movement in Russia, Georgi Plekhanov (1857–1918), did exercise a measure of influence on Roy's thinking as a Marxist. Plekhanov's *Selected Philosophical Work* are available in English translation in five volumes. *See* M. N. Roy's *Memoirs*, New Delhi, 1984, pp. 379–80; G. Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works, Vol. I*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977. *See also* next note. SNR.

[13] That the peasants *on their own* were incapable of leading and bringing about a social revolution is a well-known thesis of Marxist historiography. This was one of the principal issues which turned Plekhanov against the Narodniks who believed in the theory of peasant revolution. Criticizing the position of Narodnaya Volya (People's Will) Plekhanov argued that 'the rural population is not only less capable of conscious political initiative than the industrial workers, it is also less responsive to the movement which our revolutionary intelligentsia has begun' (Plekhanov, *Socialism and the Political Struggle*, 1883). Lenin who learnt his Marxism initially from Plekhanov was equally opposed to Narodnism. For the historical reference made by Roy, *see* Friedrich Engels, 'The Peasant War in Germany' in *The German Revolutions*, ed. L. Krieger, Chicago, 1968. SNR.

VII What do we want? Our Immediate Programme

1. As the party of the proletariat, our object is the establishment of a classless society of free producers. In other words, we are the consciously revolutionary vanguard of the working class, marching in the historic struggle for the social liberation of the oppressed and exploited masses, for the emancipation of society itself from the system of class domination. But our ultimate goal is a long way off. Much ground has to be covered before we shall come within the reach of our goal. The long march ahead will be resisted by a variety of enemies, obstructed by all sorts of difficulties. Whole host of enemies will have to be overwhelmed, innumerable difficulties surmounted, so that we can ultimately reach our destination. In short, a whole period [*sic*] of the way has to be fought for.

Our immediate object is victory in this revolutionary struggle. The victory will bring us near to our ultimate goal. Having our eyes fixed on the goal of social liberation of the toiling masses, we enter the struggle for the national freedom of the Indian people. But by national freedom we do not mean a superficial political change. Even complete independence, unless associated with a revolutionary democratic programme, will be mere substitution of the white bureaucracy by a brown one. That would not give even political liberty to the toiling masses constituting the great majority of the nation. In a merely politically 'free' India, governed by the native upper classes in the place of the British, the bulk of the nation will remain in bondage—oppressed and exploited economically. National freedom required by the toiling masses, peasants, workers, artisans, small traders, employees, poor students, lower middle-class intellectuals—must be something more than the freedom to strive and strive with patriotic zeal. For the welfare of the masses, national freedom must coincide with social revolution. Parasitic classes that thrive on the ruin of the producing masses must be deprived of their privileges. Economic institutions, usury for example, that pauperize the masses, must be swept away. Social relations that rob the producer of the entire surplus produce and even encroach upon the narrow margin of the necessary produce, must be abolished. To carry through these revolutionary changes political power is necessary. But the nationalist bourgeoisie have not shown any inclination towards these changes. For historic reasons they are unable to carry them through. Therefore, if national freedom will mean transfer of political power into their hands, social changes urgently required for the welfare of the masses will not be effected. National freedom will be a dead sea fruit for them. And without the welfare of the masses, there is no national progress and prosperity.

We want that political national freedom, which must mean actual participation of the masses in the administration of the country. Political power is the instrument for enforcing social changes. The instrument should not become the monopoly of those who do not want these changes, and are even opposed to them. The instrument must be at the disposal of those who want the changes, and shall, therefore, use it for the purpose.

The argument that let us have national freedom first, then we shall solve the internal problem, is meant to fool the masses. We want that the anti-imperialist struggle should be carried on with the clear purpose of enforcing a concretely defined programme of national revolution. The main items of this programme are: 1. Establishment of a democratic state in which the masses shall have real political power—not to be deceived with legal fiction as under parliamentary democracy. 2. Abolition of the native states and semi-feudal landlordism. 3. Transfer of the ownership of the land to the cultivator. 4. No compensation to the dispossessed. 5. Cancellation of the peasants' indebtedness to the usurers. 6. Nationalization of the mechanical means of transportation, public utilities, and mines. 7. No indirect taxation; main burden of taxation to be borne by unearned income. 8. Statutory guarantee for a minimum wage, required to secure the workers a decent standard of living, for healthy conditions of labour, for housing, for social insurance (against unemployment, sickness, old age, maternity, etc.) 9. Free and compulsory education to the boys upto 16 and girls upto 14 years. 10. Constitutional guarantee for the freedom of press, speech, and association.

This programme of national revolution gives a concrete form to the ideal of Swaraj. This is the Swaraj wanted by the vast majority of the nation. The welfare of the whole nation lies in the realization of this programme. The enforcement of this programme will remove the obstacles to the modernization of the economic life of the country which in its turn, is the only way to the progress and prosperity of the people as a whole. Those who do not subscribe to this programme of national revolution, identify the national welfare to the sectional interests of the upper classes, conceive national freedom as removal of restrictions upon the ability of the Indian landlords and capitalists to fleece Indian peasants and workers. Even such 'freedom' might not altogether be an unmixed evil, if the nationalist bourgeoisie were prepared to carry through the democratic revolution. As they are not, 'National freedom' of their liking will further ruin the nation.

We shall rally the oppressed and exploited masses in the struggle for revolutionary democratic freedom to be established on the overthrow of imperialist domination; we shall make the peasant masses conscious of the causes of their ruin; formulate their objective demands in concrete forms; lead them in their struggle for the redress of their immediate grievances; help them to develop their organizations suitable for the defensive as well as offensive purposes; transform the incipient peasant revolt into a consciously revolutionary mass movement; harness the formidable forces, marshalled in that movement for the conquest of national freedom. We shall tell the artisans that their ruin results from bankruptcy of peasant masses; that handicraft cannot be revived unless the peasant masses had money to spend. We shall thus win over the numerous artisan class as an auxiliary force of the agrarian revolution and therefore an active asset in the anti-imperialist struggle. On the other hand, we shall demonstrate the impossibility of reviving the village industries as self-sustaining economic occupations. We shall help the ruined artisans to look ahead, seek salvation in the rapid growth of modern industry. We shall help them to realize that imperialism and its native allies—'landlords and usurers'—stand in the way of their economic salvation. Thus we shall transform their dejected discontent into revolutionary consciousness. A demoralized class will be enthused with militant spirit—to fight for its salvation. It will become an active revolutionary factor. We shall rally the rural trading class under the banner of agrarian revolution by showing them that a prosperous peasantry is the condition for the expansion of trade.

We condemn the cult of *charkha* as an economic futility. The utopian programme of making *charkha* supply the village weaver with all the yarn, if ever realized, would be the greatest calamity for India. In order to produce the necessary yarn, with the primitive spinning wheel, an enormous amount of social labour would be wasted. Productive employment of social labour is the source of national wealth. Draw upon that source wastefully, and you restrict the growth of national wealth; you have a perspective not of an economic progress, but of decay. The *charkha* is not the emblem of the economic freedom of the village, as it is fantastically claimed to be by those lacking the most rudimentary idea of the science of economics. It is an emblem of social stagnation—economic backwardness.

We shall oppose the diversion of the national movement in such politically impotent and economically futile activities as introduction of *charkha*, propaganda for *khaddar*, and revival of village industries. These activities are meant to avoid the revolutionary solution of social problems. Those advocating these activities are eager to patch up the decayed social system, and hide their objectively reactionary intentions in humanitarian professions. We want a revolutionary eradication of the evils eating up into the very vitals of the Indian society. We want to make the victims of these evils revolt against the intolerable conditions of life, and organize them in a militant struggle for better life, brighter future. Fire the oppressed and exploited masses with the zeal for a better life and brighter future, and you will have mobilized an irresistible army in the attack upon imperialism. The rebellious masses must vanquish imperialism if they are to attain their new goal. We shall show the masses the way forward—the way of revolutionary struggle, the way of ruthless combat. We shall help them to turn their back on the post. We shall teach them to place no faith in palliatives and the legendary golden age of medieval reaction. We shall make the oppressed and exploited masses conscious of a social revolution, make them realize that there is no other way to their salvation, and lead them in the fight for national freedom as the beginning of social revolution.

We shall help the lower middle class (employees, poor students and intellectuals) realize that the way out of their present economic bankruptcy lies neither in the Indianization of the services, nor in the precarious development of the home industries behind the high wall of protection, nor in the cry of 'back to the villages'. We shall convince them that they are the victims of a vicious system, which must be ended because it cannot be mended. We shall explain to them how their salvation lies only in the normal economic development of the country, and how that is not possible before imperialism is overthrown and its adopted social base disrupted. We shall tell the lower middle class, particularly the intellectual elements, that they must choose between revolution and degeneration; that there is no middle way; making them realize their position, we shall win them over for the revolution. Today they participate in the nationalist movement mostly actuated by sentimental reasons. For, the way out of the present position of the economic bankruptcy, they hopefully look in the past. Their vision is clouded by the imaginary picture of an idealized past. Their eyes are fixed on the past, they are not able to look boldly in the future where their salvation lies. Idealization of the past is the symptom of discontent with the present, and indicates a desire to change it. The lower middle class have no future in the capitalist society. Therefore, the future looks discouragingly dark to them and they naturally look for a message of hope in the past. We shall help them look forward—farther than the limits of capitalist society. They are largely proletarianized, for all practical purposes. But they do not realize the fact. They are intellectual workers—workers nonetheless. We shall help them to realize the reality of their social position. They have nothing to lose but their class prejudice which has no longer any economic basis. They have no reason to remain faithful to the traditions of a class culture which could not guarantee them a privileged position in society. They have no reason to idealize the decayed feudal–patriarchal social relations (joint family, etc.) which could not prevent their destitution. They have no more reason to place confidence in capitalism which has given little protection to their class in other countries. We shall help the lower middle-class intellectuals break the chain of prejudice that keeps them precariously tied to the propertied classes that offer them no protection; to break away from reactionary traditions of a society which has outcast them, which cannot guarantee them a living standard; to be conscious of the important and revolutionary role they could play if they would.

We extend our hands of comradeship to the lower middle-class intellectuals. We invite them to join us in the great task of carrying the democratic revolution. We exhort them to realize the reality of their social position; to get over the illusion of an idealized past; to look boldly into the future. We appeal to them to rise over prejudices of education which cannot keep starvation away from their doors. We draw their attention to the fact that they are proletarianized. They should break away *ideologically* from the propertied classes which have closed the doors on their face, and take their place among the oppressed and exploited masses. Thanks to their education and intelligence, they will be able to wield great influence upon their fellow victims of class domination; to organize them in the struggle for freedom; to lead them to victory; to take a leading role in the reorganization of the society in such a way as would end poverty, establish freedom, promote education, and quicken progress.

We call upon the lower middle-class intellectuals to join us in the historic task of remaking the Indian society; of letting the dead past bury its dead, of blazing the trail of progress and prosperity for the nation as a whole. We appeal to them to realize that the village cannot be reconstructed—it is doomed by history to disappear; to grasp the simple economical fact that industries based on primitive tools cannot possibly hold their own against [the] modern machine; to realize that the remotest village is drawn into the whirlpool of the capitalist world market in which competition rules with ruthlessness. We warn them against the illusion that capitalism will cure all evils. We ask them to look around the world. That would shake the faith in capitalism. Finally, we warn them against the lure of Fascism.[14] Let them only get acquainted with the real situation where this bloody pest runs rampant, and all admirers of liberty, democracy, culture, will be repulsed by the spectacle of slavery, violence, reaction, barbarism. Do not be deluded by the false colour of nationalism. Fascism is a misleading ideal for those aspiring for national freedom.

We shall work for the mobilization of the various sections of the oppressed and exploited masses for an effective struggle against imperialism. We shall help them to organize themselves to fight for their respective demands. In course of their fight their revolutionary consciousness will be sharpened. Thus class struggle will strengthen the fight for national freedom, and this is turn, will lead to democratic social revolution.

We shall train the proletariat for the decisive role in the ensuing fight for national freedom and democratic revolution. They will receive the training in the midst of the struggle. While standing in the forefront of the nationalist movement, and cooperating with all the other classes antagonistic to imperialism, the proletariat will fight for enforcing their immediate demands regarding wages, conditions of labour, social insurance, right of association. The fight for these partial demands will quicken the class consciousness of the proletariat; consequently they will be better qualified to play the decisive role in the democratic revolution.

The overthrow of imperialism and the accomplishment of democratic revolution will bring us within sight of our ultimate goal. Social transformation, to be effected in the near future, clear the way for the capitalist, if the revolution takes place under the leadership of the bourgeoisie. In India the long overdue bourgeois democratic revolution will take place in the teeth of opposition of the bourgeoisie themselves. Consequently, it will not clear the ground for capitalism. It will take place as the immediate prelude to a deeper social transformation. We shall guarantee that through the establishment of proletarian hegemony in the struggle for national democratic freedom, we shall lead the proletariat to capture that strategic position by the dint of tireless revolutionary activity; of the ability to rally the semi-proletarian oppressed and exploited masses around themselves in the fight against imperialism. Having won the confidence of the semi-proletarian masses in the course of struggle for democratic national freedom, the proletariat will be in a position to lead them further—to enlist their support in the task of building up the socialist society.

As the party of the proletariat we want the establishment of socialism, that is, reorganization of the society on the basis of the common ownership of the means of production. The welfare of the oppressed and exploited masses, comprising 90 per cent of the nation, also demands such a reorganization of the society. Capitalism has no perspective of normal development in India. Rapid mechanization of the means of production, so urgently needed for the eradication of the social evils of the country, cannot take place within the limits of capitalism. Therefore, reconstruction of the Indian national economy must be from the very beginning on the line of socialism. But the allies of the proletariat, particularly the peasantry, will not go over to socialism directly. They will have to be led in that direction gradually, by stages.

We shall not enforce the programme of the proletariat over the semi-proletarian masses. We shall not ask them to accept our leadership on our terms. We shall point out to them what they must have for their own welfare and shall join them in their fight to get that. No only join the fight but place ourselves at the forefront of it. Liberation of the semi-proletarian masses from foreign imperialism and native reaction will advance us on the road to our own emancipation.

Note

[14] Roy had seen the rise of Fascism and establishment of the Fascist dictatorship in Italy in the twenties. Before leaving Europe he had also witnessed the rise of Nazism in Germany. In prison, among other matters, he also thought and wrote at some length on this fearful phenomenon, and on his release he published this segment from his jail manuscripts as a book entitled *Fascism: its philosophy, profession and practice*, D. M. Library, Calcutta, 1938. Selected portions of this book have been included in the second part of this volume. SNR.

VIII Our Differences

There are communists who do not approve of the line we propose to follow. The founders of our party were the pioneers of the revolutionary proletarian movement in this country. They undertook the task of organizing the party of the working class as soon as the masses appeared on the political field under the flag of the National Congress. They laid down the ideological foundations of the prospective party. They carried on communist propaganda when communism and socialism were strange terms in this country. They were the first to criticize Gandhism and reveal its reactionary character. They introduced Marxian thought into India. Yet they were denounced as 'renegades to communism', 'traitors to working class', because they maintained that the party of the proletariat should follow the line our party proposes to follow.

'The Communist Party of India' holds an erroneous view regarding the social character and perspective [of development] of the Indian revolution. This wrong view has blinded it to the realities of the situation, and compelled it to commit tactical mistakes which have isolated it from the anti-imperialist mass movement, and even from the labour movement. Thanks to those mistakes, the party could never be more than a small sect with no influence on the political life of the country. To be true to its wrong view of the situation, the party has been giving out fantastic slogans and advocating absurd plans of action. In short, these sea-green incorruptibles of the pure proletarian cause have been doing more harm than good to the cause they profess. We want to undo the mischief. We shall lead the proletariat to take [their] proper place in the constellation of the revolutionary forces in the given situation. We do not propose to make a revolution to order. We shall be guided by the realities of the situation. We are not concerned with the proletariat born of the revolutionary imagination of our mistaken and misguided comrades. We stand with our feet on the ground. We shall represent the Indian working class as they are. We shall be limited by their limitations. We shall not undertake the task that are beyond the capacities of our class to perform just now. We shall not go miles ahead of our class. We shall always be with the class, leading it step by step in the successive stages of the revolutionary struggle ahead—our eyes are fixed upon the goal of communism. We are firmly determined to reach there. We are fully aware of the nature of the road ahead. But we do not entertain the illusion that we can cover the distance in one heroic jump. We deprcate such [a] foolhardy feat, because those attempting it will only break their necks.

The bourgeois democratic revolution is still to take place in India. The social changes historically known as revolutions, are required not exclusively for the sectional interests of the bourgeoisie. They are necessary for the evolution of the society as a whole.[15] All the social classes, except the feudal aristorcracy and the priestly caste, are interested in that revolution. Normally the urban middle-class (bourgeoisie) being, for a given period, culturally the most advanced class, and directly concerned with the social transformation, becomes the leader of the revolution. But they can carry it through only with the active support of the oppressed and exploited masses. In India the delayed bourgeois democratic revolution cannot take place in its classical form. The bourgeoisie have forfeited the right to lead it. But the tasks of the revolution have to be accomplished. The social forces of the revolution are all there. Only the bourgeoisie have deserted them. There must, consequently, be a new type of leadership. This honour does not change the social character of the revolution. The character of a revolution is determined by the forces involved in it. The leadership devolves upon different classes in different periods in history. It is also influenced by the peculiar structure of society involved in the revolution. As a matter of fact, in successive stages of its development, even the classical type of the bourgeois revolution in Europe was led by the lower strata of the nobility, poor clergy, artisans, traders, workers. Practically nowhere did the prosperous urban middle-class (merchants, manufacturers, bankers) take an active leading part in the revolutionary struggle, although the fruits of victory were everywhere monopolized by them. Indeed, wherever the bourgeois democratic revolution became completely successful, as in France for example, it had to overwhelm the resistance of the bourgeoisie themselves. The leadership of the French revolution had to pass from the Girondists to the Jacobins before it overthrew monarchy, destroyed feudalism, and performed other social tasks of the revolution. The Jacobins represented the urban lower middle-class (indigent intellectuals, poor students, artisans, small traders, etc.), but the driving force behind them was the workers of Paris and other big cities. Except under the pressure of the Parisian proletariat the revolution would not make such a clean sweep of the old order. Nearly all the leaders of the English revolution were small traders, artisans or actual working men. Cromwell himself was a brewer. Outstanding members of the protectorate, like Tuffnel and Okey, were carpenter and striker, respectively. The leader of the memorable 'Prides' purge' was a daydriver. The parliament had to be purged of the Whigs, those representatives of the big bourgeoisie, before it would take drastic measures to overthrow the royalist resistance. The 'glorious' revolution of 1688, in contrast, was actually led by the bourgeoisie, and the result was a compromise with the aristocracy and restoration of the monarchy.

The inability and unwillingness of the big bourgeoisie to lead a revolutionary struggle for democratic freedom, and the far-reaching social transformation necessary for it, is not a peculiar feature of the Indian revolution. It is a mistake to hold, as the 'Communist Party of India' does, that the simple and not unprecedented fact of the defection of the big bourgeoisie alters the social character of the impending social revolution. It is a mistake to hold that by virtue of this fact, India enters the period of proletarian revolution, skipping over the long process of social transformation in [the] course of which the conditions of a higher type of revolution are created, [and] the forces for it grow. Modern proletariat as a class is the child of the bourgeois revolution. This standard-bearer of a deeper social revolution cannot attain the necessary level of qualitative and quantitative development except on the basis of the positive achievement of the bourgeois revolution. It is sheer nonsense to hold that the development as a class is not the essential condition for the proletarian revolution. Woeful ignorance of the dialectics of social evolution and of the history of revolution is the cause of the erroneous views of the 'C. P. of India' regarding the character of the Indian revolution.

Mistaken estimate of the character of the Indian revolution logically leads to absurd notions about the perspective of its development. This absurdity is evidenced by the tactics of the Party and its slogans. In order to qualify for the place of honour abdicated by the big bourgeoisie, the proletarian must do what the big bourgeoisie has failed to do. That is to mobilize the revolutionary energy of the democratic masses and organize a determined, a relentless struggle for the accomplishment of the task of the bourgeois revolution. There are two distinct elements involved in the situation—the bourgeoisie and democracy. The latter is the backbone of the revolution. With the self-elimination of the bourgeoisie the revolution ceases to be *bourgeois*; but it remains to be *democratic*.[16] The perspective of such a situation is that the fruits of the situation may not be monopolized by the bourgeoisie. But that again will depend upon the flexibility of proletarian leadership. If the bourgeoisie could be prevented from stepping in at the last moment to put on the crown of victory won by the masses, democratic freedom will not be a formality, a legal fiction, but a reality. The proletariat will be able to direct the development of the revolution in that channel only if they succeed in winning over the confidence of the democratic elements. And this can never be done by the insane tactics and fantastic slogans of the 'C. P.'.

Active participation in the revolutionary struggle on terms of equality is the road to mutual confidence. If you try to enlist the support of the democratic masses for setting up 'Proletarian Dictatorship', you will never win their confidence. And without their confidence you shall never be able to guide the course of the revolution so that its victory may not be usurped by the bourgeoisie to oppress and exploit the democratic masses. If the revolution is not guided in this channel, the chance of its developing into a proletarian revolution will disappear, and your cherished ideal will recede even farther than it is today. On the other hand, failing to win the confidence of the masses, you simply hand them over to the bourgeoisie who discourage their revolutionary awakening, disorganize militant action, and may eventually use them for a Fascist movement. These are exactly the results so far produced by the mistaken tactics of the 'C. P. of India'. Instead of promoting a left wing inside the Congress as the spearhead of democratic masses, 'C. P.' policy has actually contributed to arrest such a development. In consequence, the leadership of the Congress, and that means of the forces of democratic revolution, has remained under the influence of anti-revolutionary and reactionary elements. Under this tragic situation, independent proletarian leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle is a mere fiction. In any case it cannot be a reality. The aim should be to help the rise of a revolutionary democratic leadership. That is the need of the moment. Nothing more than that can grow out of the objective possibilities of the situation. A given relation of forces can throw up a specific type of leadership. Anything more than that is simply a figment of the imagination of romantic revolutionaries.

In the given situation the proletariat can play a decisive role, guide the course of the revolution, only as an integral part of the revolutionary democratic leadership. The struggle must have a democratic programme; the demands must be democratic; the slogans must be democratic. The proletariat will win over the confidence of the democratic masses, and in consequence thereof exercise hegemony in their revolutionary struggle by fighting for their demands. And democratic programme is not socialism; democratic demand is not wholesale confiscation of property; democratic slogan is neither proletarian dictatorship nor soviet.

A dangerous tactical mistake of the 'C. P. of India' has been the inability to differentiate between the leadership and the rank and file of the Congress. It has failed to appreciate the objectively revolutionary significance of the Congress. Its habit of levelling the same criticism against the established leadership of the Congress as well as the incipient forces of the radical left wing, is positively mischievous. The abusive language used in this unbalanced and misplaced criticism has naturally prejudiced the nationalist rank and file against communists generally. This has placed the Congress beyond the reach of the proletarian influence. Beyond the reach of consciously revolutionary pressure, the nationalist masses have remained under the spell of Gandhiism.

We are decidedly opposed to the view held and propagated by the 'C. P.' in abusive language, that the national Congress is a counter-revolutionary organization; that it consciously serves as a tool of the capitalists. We do not approve of the plan to rally the democratic masses in a militant struggle against imperialism, outside the Congress. This is a hopeless plan, the makers of which are utterly ignorant of the situation in India, although they live here bodily. We categorically reject the absurd theory that the proletariat is the only revolutionary class, and that the anti-imperialist struggle cannot succeed except under their leadership. We deplore the failure to appreciate the revolutionary significance of the lower middle-class, and the importance, particularly, of the intellectual elements.[17] We condemn demonstrations hostile to the Congress; also the efforts to persuade the workers and peasants to break away from the united anti-imperialist front. We hold the 'C. P. of India' largely responsible for the present depression in the struggle against imperialism. Had the 'C. P.' pursued the policy initiated and carried on successfully for years by the pioneers of the communist movement—the policy of promoting the rise of the left wing to bid for the leadership of the Congress, with programme of democratic revolution, the political situation might be entirely different today.

In our opinion, as a movement, the National Congress is of revolutionary significance. It commands the confidence of the oppressed and exploited masses, that is to say, of the social forces of the democratic national revolution. It is a great mistake to look upon it as a political party of the bourgeoisie. A political party must have a homogeneous class basis. The Congress is a coalition of classes. As such, it must, of course, be dominated by one or the other of the constituent elements. Therefore, there is a danger of its coming completely under the influence of the bourgeoisie. As a matter of fact, it has all along been more or less, directly or indirectly, under their influence. The result has been that its objective revolutionary potentialities have not been developed. But the potentialities remain. The democratic masses, constituting the backbone of the Congress, must rise against imperialism, must strive for a social transformation. The bourgeoisie cannot lead them in that revolutionary struggle. They must have a different leadership. The Congress can never be the party of the bourgeoisie; because in that case it must cease to be what it is. If the present tendency of its leadership goes much further, the Congress is sure to disintegrate. Disintegration has already begun in consequence of the complete victory of the right wing, and in the absence of an alternative leadership. They are gravely mistaken to think that the disintegration of the Congress is a welcome process; that it will make the democratic masses amenable to a revolutionary leadership. Disintegration will be surely followed by demoralization, and that is not the atmosphere in which a revolutionary development takes place. We want to head off such a possible disaster, and shall help the crystallization of a radical democratic left wing to replace the present leadership of the Congress.

The National Congress, as the organ of anti-imperialist struggle, is the creation of the democratic masses. It must be wielded by the masses for the purpose it is created. It is the specific form of organization out of the peculiar conditions of the country. The struggle for the overthrow of imperialism, and for the establishment of democratic freedom must be conducted by a coalition of the oppressed and exploited classes. The coalition will naturally be dominated by the most revolutionary class which will acquire that position by virtue of greater activity, firmer resolution, clearer foresight, and by virtue of greater devotion to the common cause.

The National Congress being a specific form of mass organization necessary in the immediate stages of the democratic revolution, its possible disintegratism will only impose upon the consciously revolutionary vanguard of the democratic masses the task of recreating a similar organization. Therefore, to prevent the possible disintegration of the Congress is obviously the most sensible tactics to be followed by the party of the working class. We shall follow this line of tactics. We shall rally the Congress rank and file in a renewed struggle against imperialism. We shall place before them the programme of democratic national revolution—a programme that reflects the demands of the various oppressed and exploited classes entering into the revolutionary united front. We shall place ourselves at the forefront of the struggle for the realization of that programme. We shall not endeavour to force the maximum programme of our class—the programme of socialism—on the democratic masses. We shall make their programme, ours. The programme of democratic revolution is our immediate programme, because the way to proletarian revolution—to the establishment of socialism—lies through the realization of that programme.

We appeal to the 'C. P. of India' to rectify its mistakes. Comrades, be realists; otherwise all your talk about Marxism is vain. Marxists must be guided by the objective realities of the situation. Does not your experience of the last six years prove beyond all doubt that you have been travelling a wrong road? You have acquired no influence upon the mass movement developing under the Congress flag. You haven't been able to win the confidence of the nationalist masses. You have isolated yourselves from them. The result has been that the control of the Congress has been left to the right wing which has practically liquidated all mass activity. Isolation from the Congress movement has made you utterly unable to influence the anti-imperialist struggle. Comrades, do you realize the implications of your declaring the Congress the counter-revolutionary bourgeois body.[18] The declaration means that in your opinion not only are lower middle-classes counter-revolutionaries but the peasants also are counter-revolutionaries. Then there is no hope for

India. There cannot be any revolution in a country nearly 95 per cent of whose population is counter-revolutionary. You really do not believe that the proletariat, constituting the minute fraction of the Indian people, and still hardly formed as a class, can alone save India. That would be a fantastic belief. Yet your estimation of the character of the National Congress necessarily implies such a fantastic belief. The National Congress is the emblem of the political awakening of the masses. The oppressed and exploited masses, peasants, artisans, traders, employees, poor students, indigent intellectuals—all these have confidence in the Congress, and these are the forces of Indian revolution.

The salvation of India, together with the rest of the world, is in proletarian revolution; in the establishment of socialism. But the people of India must be led towards their salvation, stage by stage. There cannot be a proletarian revolution without the proletariat; and an Indian modern proletariat conscious of their historic mission are still in infancy. How many of the most advanced workers want socialism, understand what is socialism? Very few. You must admit, if you have any regard for reality. Do not idealize the proletariat. Do not ascribe your revolutionary zeal to the workers who simply strike for better wages, demonstrate under your leadership, attend meetings addressed by you. The numerical weakness of your party is the surest measure for the revolutionary class consciousness of the proletariat. Of course the weakness will be greatly removed as soon as you will have the good sense of adapting your activities to the realities of the situation.

The young Indian proletariat, being numerically weak, immature as a class, politically inexperienced, culturally backward, ideologically underdeveloped, cannot shoulder single-handed the enormous task of overthrowing imperialism and carrying through the democratic revolution.

Yet unless and until these historically necessary tasks are accomplished, socialism will remain a utopia; an unrealized dream. Accomplishment of the task of the bourgeois revolution is indispensably necessary for the creation of political, economic, and cultural conditions conducive to the social emancipation of the proletariat. Other social elements, primarily the peasantry, are vitally interested in the accomplishments of these initial revolutionary tasks. The proletariat must make alliance with them, with the object of fighting for the common goal. As long as the revolutionary struggle must take place on the basis of a coalition of classes most of which, though well advanced in the process of proletarianization, nevertheless cannot be expected to accept the programme of socialism, slogans such as the 'dictatorship of the proletriat', 'Soviet', are obviously unsuitable. They are sure to repel the forces of democratic revolution, thwart the formation of the necessary fighting alliance. They isolate the proletariat from the allies in the democratic revolution, and place before the proletariat a task which they can never achieve single-handed. Thus the vain desire to quicken the pace of the revolution only obstructs its development.

The propaganda for political general strike as the decisive move in the struggle against imperialism is fantastic. Supposing that the industrial proletariat will participate in the strike, what will be the situation? A minute fraction of the people (hardly 2 per cent) will be hurled in a frontal attack upon the formidable enemy. A general strike, to be effective, cannot include other classes. Then it is highly problematical that the proletariat as a class will join. General strike is the signal for insurrection in a highly industrial country. In backward countries it has little value. To lead the Indian proletariat in a political general strike is to lead them to a disastrous and demoralizing defeat. In India different roads to insurrection must be found. When general preparations are made, general strike will be a powerful auxiliary.

The proletariat will develop as a class, conscious of their historic mission, and equipped for the purpose, out of the modernization of the economic life of the country, which in its turn will be brought about through the accomplishment of the long overdue tasks of the bourgeois revolution. They will acquire the political education, ideological foresight, revolutionary experience, necessary for the accomplishment of the nation in the struggle for the democratic freedom. In course of this struggle they will win over the confidence and capture the leadership of the oppressed and exploited masses. From that strategic position, they will be able to defend the results of the democratic revolution against usurpation by the bourgeoisie; they will be able to consolidate political power in a revolutionary democratic stage based upon the oppressed and exploited masses; they will be able to use this revolutionary democratic state as the instrument for modernizing the economic life of the country at a rapid speed. In short, the accomplishment of the task of the bourgeois revolution, in the teeth of the bourgeoisie by a coalition of the oppressed and exploited classes will not entrench capitalism. It will create conditions, political as well as industrial, for the establishment of socialism.

Comrades, a false sense of loyalty to the Communist International, a mechanical view of discipline compels you to stick to a policy which cannot possibly be approved by your better judgement. But the International has national sections. The experience of these must go into the making of the decisions of the International. The resolution of the C.I. that launched you on the sterile course during the last six years, was based upon inadequate information, on a wrong estimate of the situation in India. The leaders of the International cannot guide the national sections on the right road unless these give them correct information, and have the courage to declare a resolution erroneous when it does not correspond with the realities of the situation. If the Indian section will declare that experience has proved the policy hitherto pursued to be wrong, the International will surely give serious consideration to the matter and rectify the mistake.[19]

Comrades, do not be misled by the false discipline. Centralization of leadership is not dictation from above. The principle of DEMOCRATIC centralization makes ample room for independent judgement on the part of the national sections.

The ultra-left line prescribed for the 'C. P. of India' was a corollary to a general line which the International has fortunately given up all but in name. The line led to a series of disasters for the communist movement in Europe. It helped the rise and final victory of Fascism in Germany. Bitter experience has compelled the C. I. to alter radically its attitude towards proletarian mass organizations under non-communist leadership. The wise and effective policy of united front conceived by the genius of Lenin is no longer professed, only to be violated in practice. It is being revived. The result is already apparent in France, for example, where the Fascist menace has been decidedly checked by joint action of the communist and socialist parties.[20] In Europe, the communist party used to denounce the social–democratic parties and reformist trade unions as instruments of [a] bourgeois state. Today the harmfully wrong attitude is being abandoned. Comrades, have the courage to admit that your attitude towards the National Congress was wrong, and change it accordingly. That will be a very welcome move. It will be approved by the C. I. if you only have the courage to take the initiative. It will widen the field of your activities. It will open the way for the development of a united party of the working class, and consequently will mean a valuable contribution to the course you profess.

Comrades, to fight for democratic freedom is not unworthy of the proletariat. To stand in the forefront of the struggle under the banner of democratic national revolution, under the present conditions of India, is no betrayal of the proletarian cause. The vast majority of the forces involved in the revolution in the earlier stages are semi-proletarians. They cannot be rallied under the banner of communism. They are marching under the flag of nationalism. We must join them there, if we want to influence them, quicken their revolutionary consciousness, detach them from the Gandhist leadership, transform them into a formidable force, sure to overwhelm imperialism, and march trimphantly forward to revolutionize society more and more profoundly.

Comrades, let us compose our differences. We are soldiers of the selfsame cause. Divided we are weak. United we shall accomplish our common task with greater success. Owing to the immaturity of our class, we are numerically inadequate. But history has honoured our class with a great and difficult mission. Let our small army march in closed ranks. A well-organized, correctly led, realistic, united party of the proletariat is the crying need of the moment.[21] Let us supply the need and play our role as the consciously revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat, creditably, effectively, honestly, and courageously.

Notes

[15] The view that in accomplishing development of society *as a whole* the bourgeoisie, though a class, was once the agent of history, just as in the contemporary context that role is reserved for the proletariat, is central to Marxism. In the very opening section of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 'Bourgeois and Proletarians', Marx and Engels wrote:

> The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part . . . has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. . . . The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society . . . The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces then have all preceding generations together . . . The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority. [Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1946, pp. 113, 115, 121. SNR.

[16] The operation of the social dialectic, as envisioned by Roy in the contemporary Indian context, involved a bourgeois democratic revolution without the bourgeoisie, but under the hegemony of the proletariat, bringing into the revolutionary movement the peasantry, the lower middle-classes, especially students and intellectuals, besides of course the working class. This was also the view of Plekhanov in the Russian context, a view shared by Lenin in his early writings. Roy's stress on *democracy in contradistinction to the bourgeoisie* is particularly significant in view of the subsequent development of his political thought. The concept of *hegemony* in also very important; it goes back to Plekhanov, and was developed at about the same time as Roy by Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937), one of the founders of the Italian Communist Party. Roy and Gramsci knew each other well as both were members of the Comintern executive. At about the same time as Roy, Gramsci was in prison (1926–37) where his ideas were set down in thirty-two Prison Notebooks, published years after his death in six volumes by Einaudi of Turin under the general title *Quaderni del carcere* (1948–51), subsequently superseded by the scholarly edition in four volumes in 1975. SNR.

[17] Both Roy and Gramsci strongly emphasized the role of intellectuals in history, of consciousness and will, in their 'philosophy of Praxis', which 'affirms the need . . . to construct an intellectual–moral bloc which can make politically possible the intellectual progress of the mass and not only of small intellectual groups.' (A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. by Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith, London, 1971, pp. 332–3). In his incomplete *Memoirs* Roy wrote that Gramsci's prison manuscripts 'may turn out to be the greatest contribution to philosophical thought hitherto made by any communist' (M. N. Roy's *Memoirs*, p. 274). Roy wrote this in 1949–50, long before Gramsci was discovered by the Marxists in the West; two decades before his writings were available in English translation. SNR.

[18] According to the 'Manifesto of the Anti-imperialist Conference' of 1934 prepared and distributed by the official CPI:

> The Congress must be denounced as an organization of the Indian bourgeoisie, working in alliance with princes, landlords and zamindars. . . . An essential condition for the successful working out of the revolutionary United Front Programme is a ruthless fight against all treacherous attempts to confuse the issue and to create counter-revolutionary illusions among the masses, especially those carried out by the Congress, and more particularly its left wing (Congress Socialists, Royists, etc.), [Home Pol. 1935 F 7/7, Dy No. 9449 Secret S/Bol/34.1, 9.5. 35].

An article in *Inprecor* (Vol. 15, no. 10, 9 March 1935) under the title 'Problems of the anti-imperialist struggle in India', proclaimed *inter alia*:

> The group of the renegade Roy always preached, and still preaches, the great 'reformation of the Congress from below', its transformation into an organ of the masses. . . . The adherents of Roy, falsely professing to regard the interests of the communist movement, desired and still desire to make the proletarian vanguard subordinate to the diffuse conciliatory bloc of the national reformist bourgeoisie and leading ranks of the petty bourgeoisie. We don't take this way.

The article instructed 'the left organizations of workers, students and peasants' to 'join the local organizations of the Congress, on the basis of collective membership while preserving their independence and face', and asked 'the Communist Party as such to develop outside the Congress organizations a wide independent mobilization of the masses'. SNR.

[19] The Manifesto was addressed both to the Comintern which would be holding its seventh and last Congress shortly, and the 'linie' communists in India. Despite repeated inquiry, I have not been able to learn from Moscow if *The Manifesto* was considered at all by the Comintern leadership; but the change of line formally adopted at the Seventh Congress brought the Comintern strategy in India closer in some respects to that advocated in the Manifesto. However, the Comintern's hostile attitude to Roy did not change, and the 'linie' communists in India continued their slanderous campaign against Roy without respite. SNR.

[20] The French Communist leader J. Doriot (who happened to be a close personal friend of Roy) had been consistently advocating a joint front of Communists and Socialists against the rising tide of Fascism since 1929, but he was bitterly attacked by the French Central Committee and in the end driven out of the Party. However, after the attempted *coup d'état* by Fascist, royalist, and right wing organizations in France in February 1934, the line of the CPF began to change, and after its conference in Ivry in June 1934 the Communists, with Moscow's approval, signed an agreement with the Socialists on joint struggle against Fascism and on refraining from mutual criticism. In 1935 the Communist and Socialist youth organizations were merged, followed by amalgamation of the two rival trade union organizations, the CGT and CGTU, and its affiliation to the IFTU. The victory of the Front Populaire (based on an alliance of Communists with Socialists and Radicals) in the elections of May 1936 and the formation of the Front government in France put the seal of success on the new line adopted at the Seventh Congress. In the French elections the Communists withdrew a number of their candidates in the second round, and the Front Populaire coalition obtained a majority of 381 seats out of a total of 618. Communist representation increased from 10 to 72 deputies, their votes rising from 800, 000 to 1.5 million.

G. Walter, *Histoire de Parti Communiste Française*, Paris, 1948; Franz Borknau, *World Communism*, 1962, pp. 389–91; Jane Degras, *The Communist International*, Vol. 3, 1971. SNR.

[21] The appeal to the official Communist Party to unite with the RPIWC was new and is explicable only in the context of international developments that preceded the Seventh Congress, but Roy had been consistently proposing a Platform of Unity since 1931, which was intended to bring together into the national struggle for independence moderate, communist, and radical trade unions. This Platform, written by Roy before his arrest, was issued under the sponsorship of the Girni Kamgar Union, led at that time by Royists.

V. B. Karnik, *Inidan Trade Unions*, p. 60; J. P. Haithcox, *Communism and Nationalism in India*, pp. 202–6; Subodh Roy (ed.), *Communism in India 1925–1934*, pp. 313–14. SNR.

IX Our Programme of Action

In quest of the immediate goal of democratic national freedom, which will be an advance towards [the] ultimate object, we shall undertake the following concrete actions:

1. Organization of the industrial workers and salaried employees in trade unions which will be developed as fighting mass organs for enforcing such minimum demands as higher wages, better working conditions (regarding housing, sanitation, etc.), eight-hour day; insurance against unemployment, sickness, old age, and maternity, right to strike. We shall organize mass resistance to reduction of wages and salaries, prolongation of the hours of labour, system of spreading of work that is making the workers perform more labour with the same wages; to repressive measure against militant labour movement. We shall combat the efforts to corrupt and emasculate the labour movement, with the pernicious doctrine of class collaboration—of cooperation between capital and labour. We shall teach the workers that they have nothing in common with the capitalists. We shall help them realize this through their own experience gained in the struggle for removal of the most glaring grievances of their daily life. We shall develop the fighting spirit of the workers through the instrumentality of protest strikes, mass demonstrations, and other forms of mass agitation. We shall work for the unity of the Trade Union movement and shall cooperate with all who would fight for the improvement of the conditions of the working class.

2. Development of militant peasant movement throughout the country with such minimum demands as reduction of rent; substantial remission of rent while the slump of agricultural prices continue; abolition of illegal and extra-legal levies, in money as well as in kind, collected by the landlord and their agents; security of tenure; limitation of the rate of interest to 6 per cent per annum; no compound interest; cancellation of indebtedness when double the amount borrowed is paid up; control of the moneylender's account; and such other demands as suit local conditions. We shall organize mass meetings in villages to ventilate the grievances of the peasantry. The demands of the peasantry will be endorsed in conferences of peasants', delegates elected in village meetings. We shall organize such conferences in *tehsils*, districts, divisions, and finally on the provincial scale. We shall prepare the ground for an all-India conference of peasants' delegates. Committees of action will be set up by the conferences to carry on the agitation for enforcing the agreed demands of the peasantry.

3. Dissemination of the modern revolutionary ideas among the

students with the object of making them grasp the social significance of the movement for political freedom. We shall induce the poor students to give up the forelorn hope of earning a miserable living in a clerical employment and petty professions, and seek salvation in the revolutionary reconstruction of Indian society. We shall explain how technical education or vocational training will not brighten the prospect of the students unless conditions for the rapid industrialization of the country are created through a social revolution. We shall attract the students' attention to social problems by explaining that a superficial political change will not cure evils from which India suffers. We shall help the students to come closer to the toiling masses not with the vain spirit of saviour or sickly sentimentality of humanitarianism, but as the fellow victims of the selfsame system of exploitation, eager to join the struggle for common freedom. We shall persuade the students to turn their back on the past and look boldly into the future. We shall inspire them with a revolutionary social outlook that will make them all the more determined, all the more courageous, all the more formidable fighters for national freedom.

4. Propaganda to revolutionize the outlook of intellectuals. We shall propagate modern and social theories. We shall place the rich revolutionary experience of other people at the disposal of nationalist intellectuals. We shall help them to get over Gandhi's prejudices and come forward to give the movement for national freedom a revolutionary–democratic leadership. We shall make them understand that to play their important role in the struggle against imperialism, they must break away ideologically from the landowning and capitalistic classes and come closer to the proletariat. We shall expose the futility of such projected measures as village reconstruction, revival of cottage industries, etc. so that the lower middle class intellectuals may not waste their time and energy in vain pursuits, so that they may realize the necessity of relentless revolutionary struggle against foreign domination and native reaction as the only road to progress and prosperity of the Indian people.

5. General mass agitation to resist new taxation, the burden of which will fall upon the oppressed and exploited masses. We shall develop mass movement with such demands as abolition or reduction of the specific taxes, freedom of press, speech, and association.

6. Establishment of a fighting alliance of all the oppressed and exploited classes for conducting vigorously and resolutely, the struggle inspired with the principle of *right of self-determination and the right of revolt*. Agitation in support of the demand for a Constituent Assembly: This will be the only effective challenge to the self-arrogated prerogative of the British Parliament to dictate the political destiny of the Indian people. To press the demand for the Constituent Assembly will be [a] practical assertion of the right of self-determination; to mobilize the revolutionary

democratic masses in the struggle for self-determination and lead them to the creation of the organ of popular sovereignty; defying imperialist resistance, will be the exercise of the right of revolt. For years we carried on the propaganda in support of the slogan of the Constituent Assembly. We called upon the Congress to adopt this slogan for the agitation against the Simon Commission. Had the demand been put forward in time, the Congress would not have dissipated mass energy in pursuing for years a futile policy of pure negation; the position of the movement for freedom might have been very different today. But positive action is not expected of Gandhism. The leadership of the Congress have, after harmful delay, formally taken up the demand, only to put it aside. The demand of Constituent Assembly represents repudiation of British sovereignty in India. It represents the raising of the standard of revolt. It represents the commitment to the principle of democracy. It is antagonistic to the tradition of paternalism inherent in Gandhist political philosophy. We shall rally the nationalist masses to press the demand. We shall mobilize them in a decisive struggle for asserting the democratic right of self-determination. We shall preach the *sacred right of revolt*. We shall lead the anti-imperialist forces on the road to insurrection. There is no other way to freedom. But preparatory measures must be taken to ensure victory. The revolutionary discontent of the oppressed and exploited masses must be transformed into an organized will to fight. This will be done by leading the workers, peasants, artisans, small-traders, employees, poor students, lower middle class intellectuals in the struggle for the redress of their immediate grievances. Powerful mass organizations, particularly of the workers and the peasants, will grow in course of that struggle. These organizations will eventually serve as the foundation for the Constituent Assembly. This will never come into being with the sanction of imperialism, nor will the British rulers peacefully abdicate power obeying an adverse verdict of the people. The organ of popular sovereignty, therefore, must rise in [the] face of imperialist resistance, and have the power to enforce its will—to overwhelm that resistance. It will be able to do that only if it is created not by mere individual ballots but rises as the expression of organized mass energy. Ballots are no match for bullets; and the Indian people will have to conquer freedom under the fire of imperialist guns. The Constituent Assembly can and will rise as the organ of insurrection, as; the mighty instrument of popular revolt to assert the right of self-determination.

The oppressed and exploited masses of India have lost confidence in the British Raj. In their blind striving for freedom, they have rallied under the Congress banner. But until now they have advanced very little towards their goal under the Gandhist leadership of the Congress. They must strike out a new course, of militant struggle under a consciously revolutionary leadership. We appear as the pioneer of the new stage of the struggle for the democratic national freedom—as the revolutionary vanguard of the struggle for Indian independence. We appear with full confidence in our ability to perform the task because the way to our ultimate goal—social liberation of the working class—lies through the overthrow of imperialism and the establishment of democratic freedom. In order to work out their own salvation, the proletariat must liberate Indian society from the fetters of class domination, and this cannot happen before the conquest of national freedom.

X On the Road to Socialism

But we do not place national freedom and social emancipation in watertight compartments. The one is not to follow the other chronologically. The struggle for the latter is not to be suspended until the former is attained. On the contrary, India will be nationally free only in the course of revolutionary struggle for the social liberation of the masses of her people. The fight for national freedom is but a stage of the great social revolution that India must undergo in order to advance on the glorious road of human progress. It is as the vanguard of the social revolution that we shall lead the working class in the struggle for national freedom.

Salvation of India lies through socialism. Her economic problems cannot be solved on the basis of capitalist production. Economic reconstruction of the country, therefore, must be on the lines that will create conditions for the realization of socialism. The guarantee for this line of economic development will be provided by the social basis of the revolutionary state. It will be a democratic state because it will be based upon the support of the oppressed and exploited masses which constitute the vast majority of the nation. But it will not be the bourgeois democratic state under which effective political power is monopolized by the propertied classes, while democratic right is reduced to a legal fiction. The character of the revolutionary state will be determined by the social forces of the democratic national revolution. It must be an instrument for promoting the welfare of the toiling masses. In order to be so, it must be under their effective control. Not only the landowning classes will have to be dispossessed and disfranchised, the big bourgeoisie must also be deprived of any share of political power. They will forfeit their share by virtue of their hostility to the economic programme of the democratic revolution. The revolution will have to take place in the face of their opposition. It has to triumph over the alliance of foreign imperialism and native reaction (princes, landlords and big capitalists). The enemies of revolution cannot rationally be allowed to share the victory of the revolution. To hand over political power to the big bourgeoisie will mean liquidation of the revolution. The revolution must not be expected to commit suicide in defence of the abstract ideal of democracy. Besides, disfranchisement of the big bourgeoisie will not minimize the really democratic nature of the revolutionary state; on the contrary, that will assure real democratization of power. Because thereby the revolutionary state will be under the effective control of the masses; will be the instrument for promoting the welfare of the majority.

We stand for real democracy instead of fictitious parliamentary democracy. We shall fight not merely for the legal right of citizenship but for actual transfer of political power to the masses. We shall lead the workers, peasants, and the semi-proletarianized lower middle class to the conquest of political power. The revolutionary democratic state will be based upon the functional organizations of the oppressed and the exploited classes. The organ of popular sovereignty will not be a parliament elected by atomized, therefore, impotent individual voters. It will be a body composed of delegates of the functional organizations. Productive labour will be the basic qualification of citizenship. There will be no room for parasites.

Economic reconstruction taking place under such democratic state will further the welfare of the toiling masses, and lay down the foundations of the future socialist society. Indeed, economic reconstruction under such democratic regime will be an integral part in the process of the building up of socialism.

Development of modern industry, quickened by the accomplishment of the task of the bourgeois revolution, will strengthen the proletariat, qualitatively and quantitatively. Thanks to the prominent and decisive part played in the struggle for national freedom, the proletariat will have conquered a position of influence in the revolutionary coalition of the oppressed and the exploited classes. From that position of vantage, they will be able to guarantee real democratization of political power, and guide economic development in a line that will lead towards socialism.

That is the road to socialism in India. To attain social emancipation it will not be necessary for the striving masses of India to live through a period of national capitalistic exploitation. They have already more than paid for the much-needed liberation from serfdom and wage-slavery. Nor does India's road to socialism necessarily lie through the dictatorship of the proletariat. This road becomes inevitable in consequence of the process of social development that India has missed. Today, it is sheer nonsense to talk of establishing proletarian dictatorship in this country. It will be mischievous to do so upon the overthrow of imperialism by the revolutionary alliance of the oppressed and the exploited classes. The revolutionary state based upon this alliance will not be the bourgeois state. It will be the instrument through which the oppressed and the exploited classes will exercise political power. The conquest of political power by these classes opens the road to socialism. Proletarian dictatorship is necessary to replace bourgeois dictatorship. The really democratic character of the revolutionary state that will rise on the ruins of imperialism will obviate the necessity. It is not necessary to storm an open door. The social character of the revolutionary democratic state is determined by the verdict of history that imperialism will be overthrown and the tasks of the bourgeois revolution will be accomplished by the oppressed and the exploited classes. The role of the proletariat in this situation is not to establish the dictatorship as the instrument for the abolition of all classes. It is to lead the oppressed and exploited classes beyond the limits of bourgeois revolution, on the road to socialism which alone offers common salvation.

We shall organize, train, educate our class to play this rôle. While fighting the enemy—foreign imperialism and native reaction, which includes national capitalism—we shall be accommodating to the allies of our class. We shall win their confidence in our leadership by fighting for their interest, by virtue of greater devotion, greater sacrifice, higher idealism. Thus we shall win them over as willing auxiliaries in the historic task of building a Socialist Commonwealth.

OUR MOTTO IS : ON THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM THROUGH NATIONAL FREEDOM AND DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION.

Central Committee

LETTERS TO THE CONGRESS SOCIALIST PARTY

written in 1934, 1935, 1936

M. N. Roy

Published by the Renaissance Publishing Co.
Bombay 1937

Publisher's Note

In his reply to the 'indictment' of the General Secretary of the Congress Socialist Party, Comrade M. N. Roy stated, 'Since the leaders of the C.S.P. have chosen to join issues publicly, I shall take up the challenge and, with the object of placing the discussion on a higher level, publish my letters written three years ago setting forth the reasons for my objection to the formation of the C.S.P. and suggesting the alternative method of radicalizing the anti-imperialist struggle.' The letters are being published in fulfilment of that promise.

The letters will show that Comrade Roy had from the beginning advised against the formation of the Party and in a long letter addressed to the pioneers of the Party stated his reasons which were purely political and organizational. The letters, incidentally, deal with a number of theoretical and tactical questions of supreme importance to the nationalist movement. They have therefore an importance of their own; an importance which will continue long after the controversy and its objects are forgotten.

Bombay 1
October 1937

Introductory editorial note

On the eve of the All-India Congress Committee meeting at Patna on 18 and 19 May 1934, a group of Congressmen who were opposed to suspension of civil disobedience and participation in the forthcoming election to the Central Legislative Assembly, came together and held the first All-India Socialist Conference, also at Patna, and decided to organize an All-India Congress Socialist Party. There were about a hundred delegates from various parts of India, and Jayaprakash Narayan was elected Organizing Secretary. Shortly afterwards the CSP was formed in Bombay and adopted its own Constitution, Programme, and Resolutions, although it remained part of the Congress.

Prior to the formation of the CSP there had been efforts to organize socialist groups in India, as distinct from the Communists. In September 1931 a socialist group had been formed in North Bihar. Jayaprakash, according to his own account, had 'first imbibed Marxism in the United States through the writings of M. N. Roy', particularly from reading *India in Transition*, and after his return to India he founded a Bihar Socialist Party in 1932. In 1933 a Socialist group was formed in the Nasik Road Central Prison with Narayan, Charles Mascarenhas (a follower of Roy), M. R. Masani, and C. K. Narayanswamy as members (Thomas A. Rusch, 'Role of the Congress Socialist Party in the Indian National Congress', Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1955, p. 147). According to Horace Williamson, Director of the Intelligence Bureau, 1931–6, 'at the end of 1933 draft proposals for the formation of a Congress Socialist Party made their appearance in Bombay, bearing upon them the unmistakable imprint of M. N. Roy's influence' (H. Williamson, *India and Communism*, 1935; rpt., Calcutta, 1976, p. 212). The same source mentions that in April 1934 some 'Royists' from Bengal, Bombay, and the United Provinces and some followers from the Central Provinces of R. S. Ruikar, at that time a Vice-President of the All-India Trade Union Congress, met at a conference at Jubbalpore 'to hold the inaugural meeting of the All-India Socialist Party' (Williamson, ibid., p. 207). These various efforts lay behind the founding of the CSP.

From the beginning the Royists were closely associated with the CSP; at the same time within the CSP there were divisions, and some of the leaders like M. R. Masani and Purshottam Tricumdas at Bombay were quite hostile towards Roy and the Royists (Roy Archives at Nehru Museum, File No. 111/2, 'Letter from Bombay associates to Roy', 12.12.1934). Among the Royists who held prominent positions in the CSP organization were Mascarenhas (executive member), Rajani Mukherji (General Secretary, Bengal CSP), V. M. Tarkunde (Secretary, Maharastra CSP), Dharamdas Goonavardane, Maniben Kara, Dr M. R. Shetty, H. R. Mahajani, A. K. Pillai (founder of the CSP in Kerala), Dasarathlal Thakar (Gujarat) (these names appear in the issues of the *Congress Socialist*, Bombay, of 1936 and 1937). Among the founder–leaders of the CSP, Jayaprakash was an ardent Marxist at that time, though not a communist, and he was keen on collaboration with the Royists. Masani had been a member of the British Labour Party and was opposed to Marxism. Asoke Mehta was a democratic socialist, while 'Achyut Patwardhan and Ram Manohar Lohia shared Gandhi's faith in governmental and economic decentralization and non-violent revolution' (J. P. Haithoox, *Communism and Nationalism in India*, Princeton, 1971, p. 219).

The 'linie' or official communists were initially very antagonistic to the CSP, but after the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, the communists, following Moscow's instruction, began getting into the CSP, and through it, into the Indian National Congress. The Communist Party had already been declared an unlawful organization by the government; the communists now sought legal shelter via the CSP in the Congress, on which the government's ban had been lifted (12 June 1934) after it had suspended the Civil Disobedience movement. Both the Royists and the Communists tried to influence and gain control of the CSP, but at least initially, as the Director of the Intelligence Bureau reported, 'Roy's disciples triumphed and the programme which the Congress Socialists eventually produced came very near to that which Roy has had in mind for a number of years past' (Williamson, ibid., p. 217).

However, subsequently, as Roy and his followers left the CSP, the communists rapidly extended their influence and control over the organization. By 1937 two leading communists, E. M. S. Namboodripad and Sajjad Zaheer, had become joint secretaries of the CSP, and two others were on the Executive Committee. Several others occupied key organizational positions (Sundarayya in Andhra, Gopalan, Ramamurthi, and Jeevanandan in Madras and the south). In 1938 the communists tried to capture the organization after a confidential CPI document fell into the hands of the CSP leadership revealing the communist plan to either gain full control of or destroy the CSP. The Communist bid was very narrowly defeated at the Lahore Conference of the CSP, and the break took place in May 1940 when the CSP executive decided to expel all communists from the Party. (M. R. Masani, *The Communist Party of India*, Bombay, 1967, pp. 48–54.) But by that time the communists were so well-positioned in the CSP organization that they succeeded in taking away with them 'one-half to one-third of the party membership in Bengal and the Punjab, as well as the greater part of the party organization in Travancore–Cochin, Andhra, and Madras. The CSP also soon lost control of the All-India Students Federation, the All-India Kisan Sabha, and the All India Trade Union Congress' (Thomas A. Rusch, ibid., pp. 354–6).

From the outset Roy's attitude to the CSP would seem to have been ambivalent. From behind prison bars he instructed his followers to cooperate actively with the Congress socialists. He hoped to persuade the latter to accept his analysis, programme, and guidance, and to a considerable extent succeeded in this. He continually cautioned them against errors and deviations, sending them letters of advice through clandestine channels. However, there were important differences. Both from theoretical and practical consideration, he wanted the CSP to drop the term Socialist from their nomenclature and rather than forming a separate political party within the Congress, to work there as cent per cent Congressmen, becoming an organized left wing of the Congress that would eventually dislodge the right wing leadership and capture the organization. At the same time he wanted an independent revolutionary working class party with organizational form and method of operation suitable for such a party in the given conditions of India. Besides, although initially he favoured collective membership, he later completely rejected this form which he thought would weaken the Congress; but the CSP leadership continued to support collective affiliation. Central to Roy's approach was the thesis that 'the struggle for the leadership of the Congress must take place not under the flag of Socialism, but under that of democratic national revolution'. And the instrument for achieving political independence and socio–economic revolution would be the Constituent Assembly.

It would appear from Roy's unpublished letters to his followers and his writings after his release from jail, that he did not hold in particular regard the leaders of the CSP. In his estimate they were a vacillating group of people, who had not quite freed themselves from the influence of Gandhian and reformist varieties of socialism, and were excessively dependent on Jawaharlal Nehru who, in turn, could not or would not break away from his dependence on Gandhi. In any case, by March 1937 Roy and his followers decided to resign from the CSP; the resignations occurred in groups at intervals; and the break was completed by August 1937.

The letters to the Congress Socialist Party were written and clandestinely sent out from jail, and provoked debates and discussions. One of them is mentioned in Williamson's Report (pp., 221–2). After his release from jail, when Roy got publicly involved in controversies with the CSP leadership, he published the three letters together as a booklet with an 'Introduction' by A. K. Pillai and a 'publisher's note'. As a whole the booklet consisted of 78+8+2=88 pp. and carried the publication date as Bombay, October 1937. The first letter has been reproduced here exactly as it appeared in the 1937 edition; consideration of space have enforced some abbreviation of the second and third letters and Appendix IV without, I hope, affecting the author's argument; the omissions are indicated by ellipses. Where footnotes existed in the original edition, these have been retained with the initials M. N. R. against them.

In connection with these letters, I acknowledge my debt to my late friend Dr Thomas A. Rusch, who had kindly made available to me a photocopy of his Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Chicago, 1955 entitled 'Role of the Congress Socialist Party in the Indian National Congress 1931–42'. Among other works that I found useful for their bearing on the CSP, and particularly for the relation between Roy and the CSP, the following may be mentioned: *Congress Socialist Party: Programme and Resolutions*, 1934; Hari Kishore Singh, *A History of the Praja Socialist Party* Bombay, 1959; Jayaprakash Narayan, *Why Socialism*? Benaras, 1936; Jayaprakash Narayan, *Socialist Unity and the Congress Socialist Party*, Bombay, 1941; Jayaprakash Narayan, *Towards Struggle*, Bombay, 1946; Jayaprakash Narayan, *M. N. Roy*, Poona, May. 1954; Horace Williamson, *India and Communism*, rpt. Calcutta, 1976; J. P. Haithcox, *Communism and Nationalism in India*, Princeton, 1971; Narendra Deva, *Socialism and the National Revolution*, Bombay, 1946; Sampurnanand, *Memories and Reflections*, Bombay, 1962; M. R. Masani, *The Communist Party of India*, Bombay, 1967.

SNR.

Letter No. 1*

To the Organizers of the Congress Socialist Party

The Bombay Congress closes a chapter in the history of our struggle for freedom. But unfortunately it does not directly open the new chapter which must inevitably follow. The closed chapter has been a chequered one. Beginning in 1919 with the slogan of non-cooperation, it dragged on long after it was due to be closed. The chapter should have closed as far back as 1928, by which time all the possibilities of non-cooperation had been exhausted. The great success of the movement of protest against the Simon Commission should have marked the beginning of a new stage in the fight for freedom—a stage in which negative slogans of non-cooperation and boycott should be replaced by militant mass action with a positive programme. But this did not happen owing to the fatal fact that although ever since 1919 the Congress had objectively become the organ of the democratic revolutionary movement, it remained under a leadership and ideology which discountenanced revolution.

At the Lahore Congress the forces of democratic revolution did make an effort to get out of the vicious circle of the politics of negation.[2] It appeared that the belated stage of the higher form of the struggle for freedom was about to be opened. Jawaharlal's Presidential Address as well as the Independence Resolution committed the Congress by implication to the programme of democratic national revolution. That in it's turn meant that the Congress must outgrow the ideology of orthodox nationalism which is utterly incompatible with the programme of the democratic national revolution. But the rank and file were outmanoeuvered by the established leadership. The Congress was switched off from the line of development towards a straight fight by the spectacular 'salt war' and Civil Disobedience Campaign which ended in a crushing defeat as they were foredoomed to be. Defeat threatens the Congress with disintegration. At this juncture, the right wing leaders proposed to steer the Congress back to the calm waters of constitutionalism while indulging in qualified radical phrases. There developed a left wing opposition, but it was too belated, feeble, and hesitant to be effective. The right wing consolidated its position. It has captured the Congress with the help and blessing of the Mahatma. The process of reaction culminated in the amendments to the Congress Constitution adopted by the Bombay Session.[3] These amendments established a dictatorship in the Congress and guaranteed it against the democratic pressure from the rank and file.

---

* Written and delivered in May 1934. MNR.

On the other hand, the left wing opposition, defeated in the struggle for the leadership of the Congress, proposes to organize itself into a new party—the 'Congress Socialist Party'. The defeat was not inevitable; it was caused by the failure of the left wing leaders to lead the rank and file in an offensive against the politically bankrupt old leadership. The habit of hero-worship and ideological weakness were responsible for that failure. And the tactics adopted by them after the defeat have been very ill-calculated. They have resulted in the exclusion of the radical left wing elements from the Congress leadership and they have delivered the Congress machinery entirely to the right wing. Besides, the assumption of the none-too-suitable nomenclature has placed the left wing in a position which appears to be somewhat outside [the] orthodox Congress fold. There is no concrete gain to counter-balance these disadvantages. Incidentally, the resolution of the Benaras Socialist Conference, which did not allow its members to stand as Congress parliamentary candidates, or to accept any office in the Congress organization, may be pointed out as the most regrettable blunder on the part of the left wing. Such mistaken policy of self-effacement only clears the field for complete right wing domination. Having been defeated in the struggle for leadership, the left wing should have contested every inch of the ground so as to retain some share in the control of the Congress machinery. Now the prerogative of speaking in the name of the Congress is monopolized by the right wing. The left wing, representing the rank and file of the movement, and therefore, the accredited spokesmen of the masses at present, plays the role of *Cinderella*.

The spread of Socialist tendencies in the Congress left wing is welcome. It testifies to an ideological mobility. It is the sign of class differentiation in the Congress rank—a process blurred and obstructed for so many years by Utopian doctrine. The development of this process is a condition for the radicalization of the Congress rank and file—*radicalization in the democratic sense*.

At this juncture a number of pertinent questions rise before the radical left wings. Conditions for the mobilization of the masses in new forms of militant action with a definite revolutionary objective are ripening. *Do we need a 'Socialist Party'? Has a 'Socialist Party' any place in the scheme of the democratic national revolution? Will the battle in the next stage of struggle for freedom be fought under the flag of Socialism or of national revolution? Can these two objectives be compounded?*

The line taken by the Congress left wing necessarily raises these questions which must be carefully considered so that the radical tendencies are not misdirected. But correct answer to these questions of practical politics is conditional upon the answer to another question of a theoretical nature. *What is Socialism—what is a Socialist Party?*

These questions may appear superfluous, but there are very important reasons to raise and definitely answer them. We hear all sorts of people talk of Socialism and call themselves 'Socialist'. It can be stated without the risk of being refuted that there are not a few in the Congress Socialist Party itself who find 'Socialism' in reactionary economics and Utopian ethics. The Mahatma himself professes sympathy for the ideals of Socialism, although his dislike for a Socialist programme is not concealed. Besides, the doctrine of all-inclusive love is a traditional bulwark against any movement for the liberation of the masses. Yet Gandhiji has been held by many as the 'greatest Socialist'. Again, not a few out-and-out right wing nationalist leaders also profess sympathy for Socialism. Obviously what they mean by Socialism is something very different from real Socialism. Dr Ansari, for example, has informed us what his idea of Socialism is.[4] In his opinion, expressed publicly on his return from abroad, the National Government of England has realized fifty per cent of Socialism. He also expressed his admiration for the economic achievements of the Nazis in Germany. The catalogue can be prolonged without limit to show that they have vague and fraudulent ideas about Socialism. Therefore it is necessary to define the term, and then to discuss the role of a Socialist Party. Once all ambiguity about Socialism is removed, there can be no doubt or difference about the role of the Socialist Party.

In brief, Socialism is the abolition of private property in the means of production, distribution, and exchange. The basic thing, however, is production. Private property in that key position of public economy once abolished, socialization of distribution and exchange inevitably follows. For, the organization of these subsidiary branches of public economy is always determined by the mode of production. Therefore, the more exact definition of Socialism would be 'abolition of private property in the means of production'. This stricter definition rules out (guild socialism, for example) schemes for the organization of national economy through the public control of distribution and exchange.

The role of the Socialist Party obviously is to establish socialism. In other words, the Socialist Party is the instrument of a social revolution which will establish a specific form of society, free of all class domination. This transformation is possible only when society is well advanced in the line of capitalist development. Because *then only* the objective conditions for such transformation become ripe; the social revolution then becomes not only a historic necessity, but to a *great extent* (not altogether) inevitable.

By its very nature, the Socialist Party is a revolutionary party. The established social order which it proposes to abolish is fortified by the machinery of the state through which the dominating class (or classes) exercises political power. The line of action of the Socialist Party should therefore be determined by the nature of its task. The ideology of the party must reflect the consciousness of its revolutionary role.

Now, it is an outstanding fact of contemporary history that Socialist Parties throughout the world deviated from the path which must be travelled for reaching their proposed goal. They have signally failed to discharge their role. Consequently, since the debacle of the great Socialist Parties on the eve of the world war, Socialism in the current sense (as distinct from the theoretical sense) has taken on a distinct character; and Socialist Parties no longer stand for the establishment of a classless society, because they refused to travel the road of revolutionary struggle—the only road that leads to the goal of Socialism.[5] Steadfast advocates of social revolution, who did not approve of the degeneration of the old Socialist Parties, broke away, to carry on the struggle for the liberation of the masses under a new flag of Communism, and forged a new instrument, the Communist Party.

These facts of history have placed a distinctive mark on the term Socialism, and show the Socialist Party in a new light. *Today*, Socialism means the repudiation of revolutionary struggle against Capitalism and, *ipso facto*, against Imperialism. It means rejection of the struggle for the capture of power in the only way possible—namely, revolutionary mass action. Consequently, it means loyal support to the parliamentary democratic State—the weapon created by the bourgeoisie to fortify their domination. It means capitulation of the Working Class to the established system of Capitalism and Imperialism. It means, at the very best, some sort of readjustment of the decayed system of capitalist production with the approval of the ruling classes. When it is known that Socialism has come to have all these meanings, which have nothing to do with *real* Socialism, it becomes understandable why practically nobody finds it difficult to declare himself a 'Socialist', or take a patronizing attitude towards Socialism. The nature of its goal having changed so radically, a Socialist Party today has a distinctive role given to it by history. It cannot outgrow the role. Today a Socialist Party is not a party of revolution, but of reform. It is not an instrument for the overthrow of the established social order. It seeks to *reform* the order. The shameful record of great Socialist Parties of Europe conclusively proves what Socialist Parties are bound to be.

Now, it can be confidently asserted that few ideologically clear and politically conscious members of the Socialist Party would want such a party in India. It would simply be of no use. It has no place in the politico-economic setting of the country. By its very reformist, anti-revolutionary nature, it cannot be an instrument in our struggle for freedom. The only argument of any force to justify the existence of a Socialist Party is that it educates, organizes, helps, and leads the working class to improve their condition (political as well as economic) gradually, but surely, within the framework of the capitalist system, instead of plunging into the risky adventure of revolution. This argument has no force in India, because in a capitalist society any improvement in the conditions of the working class, as took place in some of the countries of Europe and America, is possible only in the period of capitalist prosperity. Again, acquisition by the workers of democratic political rights, by the exercise of which (in the opinion of Socialist theoreticians) they can gradually change the class character of the State, presupposes the existence of a democratic regime. Neither of these conditions obtain in India. So in this country a Socialist Party has absolutely no ground to stand upon.

In support of this conclusion a few facts can be recollected. The effort to organize a Socialist Party in India is not new. As far back as 1920 there was a plan to organize in India a political party on the principles and model of the British Labour Party. An able and popular politician like Lajpat Rai was interested in the plan. A few years later, again under the distinguished patronage of Lajpat Rai, efforts were made to establish an *Indian affiliate* of the Independent Labour Party.[6] The plan was to form socialist groups of radical intellectuals. Later, a number of Swarajist members of the Legislative Assembly constituted themselves into a Socialist Party. The attempt to form a Labour Party was repeated more than once, emissaries coming from England with the purpose. Mr N. M. Joshi and his associates in the Indian labour movement have all along been actively concerned with the promotion of Socialism.[7] This did not prevent them from retaining their membership of the Liberal Federation, the Congress being too revolutionary for them. Some years ago, distinguished leaders of the I.L.P. visited India with the purpose of promoting the formation of a Socialist Party. A Socialist Party was actually inaugurated in the Punjab.

It is not necessary to prolong the list with less known plans locally made. All the efforts failed. There must be some deep-seated reason. It would be frivolous to contend that in the past the plans were not seriously conceived, the people concerned were not sincere, or determined efforts were not made. The reason is that objective conditions under which a Socialist Party can thrive or even have a precarious being, are, *now* utterly absent in India. In other words, in her present conditions, India does not offer a social basis for such a party. And a political party can grow, function effectively, and be of any use, one way or the other, *only when* specific social conditions call it into being. Reformist Socialist parties are features of countries enjoying, in greater or less degree, the freedom of normal capitalist development; that is, of countries not subjected to the misfortune of colonial slavery. Reformism can corrupt the masses only when the bourgeoisie are in a position to make fairly substantial concessions.

It follows from this analysis of the genesis of a Socialist Party, that it has no place in colonial countries, and very small room in countries with backward capitalist production. Further, the decay of Capitalism as a world force has pronounced the death sentence over Socialism (reformist) and consequently on Socialist Parties. The tragic downfall of the great Social–Democratic parties (as distinct from Marxist parties) of Europe teaches us a wholesome lesson.

Every time there was an effort to organize a Socialist party, I discouraged the organizational plan while encouraging the socially radical tendencies finding expression therein. My argument was always objective. I always explained why the plan could not succeed, and appealed to the radical elements to form some more suitable instrument for bringing their admirable spirit to bear upon the general political situation effectively. I do not claim the credit of a prophet. I simply mention these circumstance to bear out the fact that what is being said here is the result of mature consideration, and based upon experience.

From the above it can be concluded that if the Congress Socialist Party be crowned with greater success than the previous efforts, then it will succeed *not as a Socialist Party*. To succeed, it will have to act either as a Communist party or as the Party of national democratic revolution, *both of which are historical necessities, having the respective social backgrounds*. Why then begin with a misleading name? Why sail under a discredited flag? Why use terms which, if not hapazardly adopted, indicating ideological vagueness and political indecision, commit you to the programme of sterile reformism?

In one respect the Congress Socialist Party appears to be born under better auspices. Past efforts to form Socialist Parties had no mass support. It would be an exaggeration to contend that the Congress Socialist Party is the creation of a mass movement. What distinguishes it from past ventures is that it represents a process of class differentiation and radicalization in the Congress rank and file. And precisely therefore, the denomination chosen by it is inappropriate. It does not concretely represent the social and political striving of the Congress rank and file. *It either goes too far or does not go far enough*. If the Congress Socialist Party intends to rally the nationalist masses under the flag of Communism (*real* Socialism), it is making the mistake of running too far ahead of those it wishes to lead. If, on the country, it proposes to be a Socialist Party in the historical sense of the term, then it hinders, instead of helping, the process of radicalization of the nationalist masses. Radicalization, that is to say quickening, of the revolutionary consciousness of the oppressed and exploited classes, is an advance towards the decisive fight with Imperialism. This, in its turn, cannot take place under the leadership of Socialist Party because, notoriously, *gradualism* is the cardinal principle of Socialist theory and consequently must dominate all the policy and tactics of Socialist Parties. In short, anti-imperialist struggle, the task of the Movement in India, cannot be conducted by a Socialist Party—a party by its very nature committed to the non-revolutionary doctrines of reformism and gradual advance.

You may contend that you are not going to organize a reformist and gradualist Socialist Party. *Then, I say, you will not form a Socialist Party. Why then assume a misleading name*? It will only confuse the situation. By the very nature of the forces it represents, the Congress Socialist Party cannot be the camouflaged name of the real instrument for the establishment of Socialism, namely, the Communist Party. The fact that you prefer the discredited 'Socialist flag' proves that you desire to differentiate your Party from the Communist Party. In what is the Socialist Party distinct from the Communist Party? Contemporary history gives a clear answer to this question. The Socialist parties reject the path of revolutionary struggle as the means for the realization of Socialism. By pinning its faith in parliamentary democracy, the Socialist Party logically becomes an advocate of constitutionalism. Obviously such a party has no place in contemporary India. You certainly do not propose to organize such a party. The forces you represent require an instrument for revolutionary action. The type of political organization historically adopted to reformist purposes is obviously unsuitable for a situation in which revolutionary mass action is the supreme task of the moment. *The Congress Socialist Party represents the revolutionary democratic elements in the Congress*. Theirs is a struggle against foreign Imperialism and the pre-capitalist, reactionary forces of the native society. Their goal is national freedom and the creation of conditions for unrestricted economic, social, and cultural progress. Therefore, in order to be the rallying ground of the revolutionary democratic anti-imperialist forces, the party must adapt its method of agitation and form of organization to its social background. It should not call itself Socialist; nor should it adopt a Socialist programme.

If to organize a Socialist Party will be a misadventure, theoretically as well as politically, it will be a *great blunder tactically*. The plan to get the Congress to adopt a really Socialist programme is Utopian. The programme of a particular political organization cannot be arbitrarily imposed upon it. It is determined by its social composition. Socialism is the programme of the working class (in which the poor peasantry and salaried intellectuals are included). The social basis of the National Congress is much broader. Traditionally the Congress is the organ of the struggle for the national freedom of the Indian people. Nevertheless, up till now its programme and policy have been coloured by the social character of its leadership. In order to become an effective instrument in the struggle for national freedom, the Congress must adopt a revolutionary democratic programme. But it can under no circumstances go to the extent of endorsing a Socialist programme. To *avoid* the adoption of the programme of democratic national revolution (which necessarily involves a form of social revolution in so far as it will destroy the pre-capitalist social relations), the present leadership of the Congress may profess sympathy for the Utopian notion of Socialism, and formally endorse some such pseudo-radical programme, as for example the *Karachi Resolution*. The immature radical elements were outmanoeuvered by that adroit move. Its effect was to thwart the process of radicalization which had made itself manifest by forcing the adoption of the *Independence Resolution* at Lahore.

Since, for social and historical reasons, the Congress cannot adopt a Socialist programme, any attempt to do the impossible will only result in the isolation of those making such efforts. That would mean an opening of an artificial gap between the objectively revolutionary *democratic rank and file and the* consciously revolutionary *left wing leaders*. This unfortunate situation is already created to some extent. The mistake must be rectified before it is too late. The line adopted by the Congress socialists, if consistently followed, will inevitably lead not to the capture of the Congress by the radicals democratic elements, but to the isolation of a small group of radical inside the Congress completely dominated by the right wing. The struggle for the leadership of the Congress *must take place not under the flag of Socialism, but of democratic national revolution*. The present political situation demands not the organization of a Socialist Party inside the Congress, a party which by the logic of the relation of forces will inevitably be an impotent and isolated group, but the capture of the Congress as such by the radical national revolutionary elements.

Undoubtedly there are genuine Socialists in the Congress left wing. There are many more who are tending towards Socialism. The Conscious and convinced Socialists naturally desire to have their own party. But their party is not the Socialist Party, but the Communist Party, and that Party, while it is a great historical necessity and is of decisive political importance in the anti-imperialist struggle, cannot openly bid for the leadership of the Congress. It must act as the revolutionary nucleus around which the national democratic revolutionary forces will be mobilized in the struggle for the capture of the leadership of the Congress, as the condition for a more effective and decisive fight against Imperialism. The revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat (the genuine Socialists, that is, the Communists), organized in their own party *outside and independent of the Congress*, will remain in the Congress as the most active members of the left wing, and through it, influence, change, and guide the policy of the Congress. Eventually the radical left wing, under proletarian hegemony exercised through its Socialist (Communist) members (who may be the leaders), will come to predominate the Congress, and the Congress will adopt the programme of the democratic national revolution. That will be the beginning of the decisive stage of the anti-imperialist struggle. The control of the Congress machinery will be a valuable asset in that struggle. With its roots stuck deep into the masses, organized so as to be in effective contact with its constituents, constituted not of a loose membership but of local and functioning bodies[*] as well as of individual members, with a clear revolutionary perspective and under a resolute leadership, the Congress may in the course of the struggle become the skeleton of the revolutionary State; of the democratic dictatorship which will challenge the power of Imperialism and its allies.

The possibilities of the Congress developing on the this line, in addition to other advantages, makes the struggle for its control an important item in the scheme of the Indian revolution. It is a mistake for the left wing (and this applies also to the genuine Socialist elements in it) to put on the misleading and discredited label of 'Socialism', because, sailing under this colour, it will not be able to occupy the position of vantage in the struggle for the leadership of the Congress, but will land in the backwaters of impotent isolation. Even leaving aside this consideration regarding the future transformation of the Congress leadership, a Socialist Party cannot be fitted into the scheme of Indian Revolution. With the Congress or without it, the proletariat has a very important place in the scheme; but to occupy that place it should be organized not in a Socialist Party but in the Communist Party. The tactical considerations weighing against the labelling of the left wing with the name 'Socialist Party' do not, however, hold good as regards the organization and the existence of the Communist Party.

Granted that the Utopian plan of the Congress Socialist Party will be realized, that it will capture the leadership of the Congress, its programme, if framed with any regard for realities, will not be Socialist. It must necessarily be *revolutionary democratic*. Indeed, the plan itself has to be dropped if the Socialist Party will stand by a full-fledged Socialist programme, even of the reformist brand, unless the Congress Socialists entertain the notion that the landlords and capitalists can be persuaded to change their hearts and be godfathers to the peasants and workers. In other words, if the C S P ever captured the leadership of the Congress, it would then have ceased to be a Socialist Party.

The struggle for the capture of the Congress, to be a matter of practical politics, must take place under the flag and programme of the National Revolution. Why should we not call a spade a spade? A genuine Socialist (not of the reformist type) should have no objection to supporting and actively fighting for the national democratic revolution, as such, without putting a red label on it. On the contrary, the mistaken policy of naming the revolutionary democratic programme 'Socialist', will mean *abandoning the real* Socialist programme: Because, the selfsame party cannot possibly advocate two different varieties of Socialism. If you call National Democratic Revolution Socialism, we must put away real Socialism. So, the mistaken zeal of the Congress Socialists to hoist the flag of Socialism is likely to end in the betrayal of the ideal cherished by them. On the other hand, to support and fight for the programme of Democratic national Revolution as such will not preclude the Socialists from carrying on propaganda for a genuine Socialist programme. The realization of the former will be the condition for the attainment of the final goal of Socialism. This can be done by all the genuine Socialists organizing themselves in a Communist Party independent of the Congress, and at the same time operating inside the Congress as the left wing.

---

[*] Since this was written in May 1934, I have come to realize that collective membership would weaken instead of strengthen the Congress organizationally. The perspective of the development is the transformation of the Congress into the Revolutionary People's Party. Collective membership will hinder that process. A federated body, composed of autonomous organizations, is not a *political party*, and therefore cannot lead the revolutionary struggle for the capture of power. MNR.

The programme of the National Democratic Revolution to be advocated by the left wing is outlined in another document* (addressed to the rank and file); concrete suggestions regarding the methods of the struggle are also made therein. Certain amendments to the Congress Constitution are formulated too.+ These are of particular importance, because they are essential for the democratization of the Congress and its transformation into an effective organ of revolutionary struggle.

Finally, let me repeat that the process of radicalization evidenced in the formation of the Congress Socialist Party must be developed in the direction of Democratic Revolution. In this situation all talk about Socialism is irrelevant. No new party is necessary. We do not want to be a group of outcastes maganimously tolerated inside the Congress, dominated directly or indirectly by the bourgeoisie. We represent the nationalist masses. The Congress belongs to us. We must assert out claim. For the time being, the right wing has the upper hand. Unless we rectify the mistake before long, the Congress will become the instrument of the nationalist bourgeoisie. Our slogan for the moment should therefore be:

Save the Congress as the organ of
Militant mass action!

Preserve it as the platform of
United Anti-imperialist Front!

Develop it as the leader of
Democratic National Revolution!

May 1934 M. N. Roy

---

*See App. II MNR.
+See App. III MNR.

Notes

[1] The 1937 first edition of the *Letters to the C S P* gave May 1934 as the date of the First Letter, but the Bombay Session of the Indian National Congress mentioned here took place in the last week of October 1934. Consequently, it seems unlikely that the First Letter was delivered before November 1934. However, earlier that year (May) the Congress had suspended Civil Disobedience and adopted the Council entry programme, and the Socialists had held their first conference at Patna. (B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, 1935, pp. 959 *et seq.*) SNR.

[2] The Lahore Session of the Congress (December 1929) declared that 'the word Swaraj in Article I of the Congress Constitution shall mean Complete Independence', thereby reaffirming the resolution passed at the Madras Session (December 1927) that 'this Congress declares the goal of the Indian people to be Complete Independence}. In December 1928, however, at the Calcutta Session the Congress, at Gandhi's initiative, had resolved to accept Dominion Status as recommended by the Report of the All-Parties' Committee, should the constitution proposed by that committee be accepted by the British Parliament in entirety 'on or before the 31st December 1929'. An amendment moved by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose was lost by 973 votes to 1, 350.

Sitaramayya, ibid., pp. 559–60; R. C. Majumder, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, 1963, pp. 316–18; Subhas Chandra Bose, *The Indian Struggle*, Vol. II, pp. 220–2. SNR.

[3] Various amendments to the Congress Constitution proposed by Gandhi were adopted at the Bombay Session. These included compulsory spinning of 500 yards of yarn per month by every Congress member, compulsory wearing of *khaddar* by every Congress officeholder, reduction of the number of Congress delegates to a maximum of 2, 000 (1, 489 rural and 511 urban), reduction of AICC to half its strength, investing the Congress President with the right and responsibility of forming his Working Committee or Cabinet entirely of his own choice. After the Bombay Session Gandhi announced that he would not remain 'even a primary member of the Congress', but a new autonomous body was set up, the All India Village Industries Association, which was to work 'under the advice and guidance of Gandhiji'. It 'shall have the power to frame its own Constitution, to raise funds, and to perform such acts as may be necessary for the fulfilment of its objects'.

Sitaramayya, ibid., pp. 971–93; Majumder, ibid., pp. 537–42. SNR.

[4] Dr Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari (1880–1936), a distinguished physician, was for many years General Secretary of the Congress and member of its Working Committee; in 1927 he was President of its Madras Session. From 1928 to 1936 he was also Chancellor of the Jamia Millia Islamia. S. S. Sen (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. I, 1972, pp. 65–7. SNR.

[5] The literature on varieties of Socialism and the break between democratic socialists and communists is very large. Some of the more informative are: A. Fried and R. Sanders (ed.), *Socialist Thought: A Documentary History*, New York, 1964, G. D. H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought*, 5 Vols., New York, 1953–8; Elie Halevy, *Histoire du Socialisme europeen*, Paris, 1938; F. Borkenau, *World Communism,* Ann Arbor, 1962. SNR.

[6] Lala Lajpat (1865–1928), honoured by his countrymen as Sher-I-Punjab, came early under the influence of the Arya Samaj movement, joined the Congress in 1888, became one of its more militant leaders, went to England in 1905 where he came in touch with Labourites and Socialist groups, and in 1907 was deported by the government for some time to Burma for organizing militant agrarian movements in Punjab. From 1913 to 1920 he lived abroad, and during his sojourn in the United States, M. N. Roy stayed and worked with him for a short while in 1916–17. The Lala presided over the Calcutta Session of the Congress in 1920 and the founding Session of the All India Trade Union Congress at Bombay that year. Later he joined the Swarajya Party founded by Chitta

Ranjan Das and Motilal Nehru. In 1928, while leading a procession protesting against the Simon Commission, he was severely beaten by the police; he died eighteen days after the brutal assault. A. R. Shastri, *Life of Lala Lajpat Rai*, New Delhi, 1957. SNR.

[7] Narayan Malhar Joshi (1879–1955) joined the Servants of India Society in 1909, founded the Social Service League in 1911, and was active in the labour movement for nearly forty years. A leader of the AITUC since 1921, and its General Secretary for some years, he broke with it in 1929 when the Communists temporarily gained control of the organization. He was often nominated by the government to represent Indian labour at International Labour Conferences. An elected member of the Central Legislative Assembly for many years, he was largely responsible for several enactments on labour welfare. A member of the Royal Commission on Indian Labour (1928–9), he also become Chairman of the Labour Subcommittee of the Indian Planning Commission (1937) headed by Jawaharlal Nehru. S. P. Sen(ed), *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. II, pp. 261–3.
SNR.

Letter No. 2*

An Open Letter to the Congress Socialists

[Opening four paragraphs deleted. The text starts from fifth paragraph.]

... The right-wingers won at Patna primarily due to the weakness of the rank and file revolt, owing to the failure of the radicals to go over to the offensive at the opportune moment, that is, immediately after the Poona Conference.[8] The failure in its turn was due to the absence of any programme of rank and file action. But the Mahatma's support was the decisive factor which gained the victory for the right wing. That support nonplussed the radicals, thus making it an easy sailing for the would-be parliamentarians.

To avoid misunderstanding, it should be specified that the misfortune was not the adoption of the policy of entering the Legislatures. Under the given conditions there was nothing else to do. The misfortune was that the right-wingers were given a free hand in the Parliamentary activities. Further, Parliamentary activities conducted by the right-wingers free from all control were bound to degenerate into futile gestures; a drift towards compromise, unless they were linked up with extra-parliamentary mass movements. This was suspended at the instance of the Mahatma himself who, thus, delivered the destiny of the Congress to the tender mercies of the parliamentarians.[9]

It was with the help of the Mahatma and his orthodox associates that at the Bombay Congress the right-wingers consolidated their victory. I need not tell you about the significance of the amended Constitution; it was a precious gift for the right-wingers. Under the amended constitution the rank and file are deprived of all initiative. Dictatorial power is vested in the Working Committee, and that power is exercised today to stifle all opposition and endorse everything done by the parliamentarians violating the principles of the Congress. The dictatorial power of the 'High Command' is further increased by the new rules adopted at Jubbulpore. The power of the President to convene the A.I.C.C. at short notice will enable the Working Committee to have all its actions endorsed by a packed and unrepresentative body. Convened at short notice, the A.I.C.C. will never represent more than a fraction of its members. Mostly those in favour of the High Command and in control of the local machinery will be present. Indeed, the Jubbulpore meeting already gave a foretaste of what is coming. Internal democracy is killed.

---

*Written and delivered in May 1935. MNR.

When you started talking about a Socialist programme, the leaders smiled benevolently. They expressed their sympathy for 'Socialism', which everyone interpreted in his own way. Only, none had real Socialism in mind. They thought, 'let the children play with the new toy, or ask for the moon, we shall go on in our own way'. But their attitude changed from benevolence to hostility as soon as you wanted to say something about the actual issues of the moment. Socialism is a matter of distant concern. Talk about it can be permitted. The adoption of a Socialist programme by the Congress is an academic proposition which can be regarded with indifference or amused benevolence. But the programme of action for the attainment of the professed goal of the Congress—that is a different matter.[10]

You can no longer entertain the illusion that the orthodox Gandhists really had any sympathies for a Socialist programme, and they would help you to force it on the Congress to the teeth of the right wing opposition.

You will never be able to make any change in the Congress programme or, what is of immediate importance, stop the dangerous drift towards compromise, so long as the machinery of the Congress remains in the control of persons who not only hate Socialism, but detest democracy, and profess the ideal of 'Poorna Swaraj', because it is so delightfully vague as to enable them to deceive their trusting followers. . . .

The objective strivings of the nationalist masses and the immediate necessity of the struggle for freedom, are compelling the radical elements to take up the fight for the leadership of the Congress. The fight will be successful, the Congress will be emancipated from the domination of the right wing and become a militant mass organization, if the fight is concentrated upon the immediate issues, that is, if it takes place for the adoption of a programme of immediate action, for an uncompromising struggle against Imperialism and its allies.

To confuse the immediate issues of the struggle for National freedom by bringing in the question of a Socialist programme will be to play directly into the hands of the right wingers.

You should answer those who attack you for advocating a socialist programme with a declaration that they are fighting a bogey set up by themselves in order to confuse the issues, that the left wing, representing the rank and file of the Congress, is not asking for the adoption of a Socialist programme, but demanding a relentless struggle for the realization of the Congress programme of complete Independence; that the left wing is not insisting upon a specific form of class struggle, but upon an uncompromising struggle against Imperialism, together with all its supporters; that the left wing does not accuse its present leaders of antagonism to Socialism, but hostility to democratic freedom.

In short, the left wing should demand the adoption by the Congress not of a Socialist programme, but of a programme of Democratic Revolution.

Historically that is the correct programme for the Congress which, by virtue of its social composition, can serve only as the instrument of bourgeois democratic revolution. In India it is the long overdue bourgeois democratic revolution that is on the order of the day. . . .

A mass agitation should be started without delay in support of the demand for the Constituent Assembly. The most suitable method of starting an agitation will be a Conference of left wing leaders to discuss the future of Congress politics.

The demand for the Constituent Assembly will be reaffirmed in a Manifesto issued by the Conference to the rank and file of the Congress. The Manifesto should be signed individually, the signatories appearing as Congressmen and not as Socialists. It should remind the rank and file of the ideal of Independence and point out how the present policy represents a deviation from that ideal. The claim to the right of self-determination will be advanced and the Constituent Assembly demanded in accordance with that claim. The Manifesto will further set forth the fundamental principles of a revolutionary democratic constitution.

The next step should be provincial left wing conferences to consider the Manifesto and endorse it. Then the document will be submitted to the local Congress organizations throughout the country. Thus the question of the Constituent Assembly and a National Democratic programme (which will be formulated as the principle of the constitution advocated by the Congress)+ will become the issues at the next session of the Congress. And these issues will inevitably raise the associated issue of leadership.

Once the plan of action is agreed to on principle, it can be easily developed in concrete detail. Meanwhile one point of vital importance may be mentioned. Propaganda with the slogan of the Constituent Assembly is useful as far as it goes. But it does not go very far. All who seriously contemplate the idea must clearly visualize the perspective of its realization. . . .** Therefore the agitation for the demand must be followed by organizational measures. . . .** Under a revolutionary leadership, its constitution and its organization thoroughly democratized, the Congress *may* itself assume the function of the Constituent Assembly *in a revolutionary crisis*.

+Appendices I and II will give an idea. MNR.

**Passages left out, set forth organizational measure to be adopted, and specified conditions under which the C. A. can and will arise. MNR.

While preparing for the general attack with the purpose of raising the struggle against Imperialism to a higher level, demands should be made to alleviate the sufferings of the masses. These can take the form of forcing our parliamentarians to act under mass pressure. Partial and immediate, political as well as economic demands may be formulated by the local Congress organizations. When the demands got endorsed at mass meetings, the Congressmen in the Assembly should be called upon to press them on the Government. Repeal of repressive laws, release of political prisoners, implementing the recommendations of the Whitely Commission, relief for the peasantry, measures to combat middle-class unemployment, concrete measures for shifting the burden of taxation from the masses to the rich, specially the landed interests—these may be among the demands.

Now I touch the most vital point. To be effective, the left wing of the Congress should free itself from the handicap of operating under the label of the Congress Socialist Party. The reason for this is purely tactical. I do not for a moment suggest that Socialist Congressmen should not be organized in a separate party. My point is that such a party cannot be inside the Congress. It must be independent of the Congress, although its members will individually remain in the Congress and constitute the driving force behind the left wing. Indeed, a radical left wing leadership of the Congress with a National Democratic programme, can and will arise only with Socialist support and under Socialist influence. Because, owing to historical reasons and existing world conditions, the overdue bourgeois democratic revolution in India will be carried through under the influence of the ideological vanguard of the working class.

Therefore, a political party of the working class is an indispensably necessary factor of the Indian Revolution even in its initial bourgeois democratic stage. It is bound to play a decisive part in the anti-imperialist struggle. The object of the Socialist party of the working class is not to persuade the Congress to adopt a Socialist programme, but to wield it as the instrument in the struggle for national independence. The *Congress Socialist* Party cannot take over the role of the historically necessary party of the working class. On the contrary, the Socialists in the Congress should join with the others in the organization of the Working Class Party, independent of the Congress, while functioning inside the Congress as its radical left wing. . . .

Concretely, and to put it frankly, I appeal to you, comrades, to consider the proposition of amalgamating all those standing for the liberation of the toiling masses into a single political party, and from that base operate in the Congress with the object of freeing it from its present ideological, political, and organizational deficiencies, and converting it into a mighty mass instrument in the struggle against Imperialism.

May 1935. M. N. ROY

Notes

[8] The Poona Conference of Congressmen authorized Gandhi (July 1933) to seek settlement with the government. The session of the AICC at Patna (May 1934) suspended Civil Diobedience and adopted the Council Entry programme. Sitaramayya, op. cit., pp. 943–60. SNR.

[9] Shortly after the Bombay session of the Congress, elections took place to the Central Legislative Assembly. In the Assembly, the government commanded 50 votes (Europeans 11, Nominated Officials 26, Nominated Non-officials 13), but the Congress (44) and Congress Nationalists (11) together had a majority of 5 over them. The balance was held by 22 Independents. In practice, the majority was ineffective since the Governor-General certified the Bills and measures proposed by the government, even when they were rejected by a majority vote in the Assembly. Majumder, op. cit, II, pp. 542–5; Sitaramayya, op. cit., pp. 996–1002. The meeting of the AICC at Jubbulpore (24–5 April 1935) nevertheless 'expressed its satisfaction at the work of the Congress Party in the Assembly'. Sitaramayya, ibid., p. 1010. SNR.

[10] On 17 September 1934 Gandhi issued a statement that *inter alia* declared: 'I have welcomed the formation of the Socialist group. Many of them are respected and self-sacrificing co-workers. With all this, I have fundamental differences with them on the programme published in their authorized pamphlets.' (Sitaramayya, ibid., p. 975.) The Congress Working Committee had passed a resolution stating that confiscation of private property and the necessity of class war were 'contrary to the Congress creed of non-violence'. *Congress Bulletin*, Allahabad, 27 June 1934. SNR.

Letter No. 3*

To the Executive Committee of the Congress Socialist Party

MY DEAR COMRADES

It is unfortunate that my attitude towards the organization of the Socialist Party has been misunderstood. I gather that the misunderstanding is particularly about the suggested liquidation of the party. The suggestion was made more than a year before, and on the strength of a critical analysis of the tendency then prevailing. The grounds of the suggestion were clear enough. . . .

I suggested liquidation of the party as originally formed (there have been modifications, having regard for which my suggestions now can also be modified) on the following grounds:

(1) Tactical and strategical considerations as regards the immediate tasks of the party;

(2) the necessity of adapting the organizational structure of the party to the *political* conditions of the country, and

(3) the possible danger of deviation from the path that alone leads to the ultimate goal, through the creation of conditions indispensably necessary for the realization of the goal of Socialism—namely, capture of political power.

Now, let me explain how these grounds are still valid; and therefore, certain modifications are necessary in the method of tackling the immediate tasks of the party, in its organizational structure and in the mode of operation as regards advance towards the ultimate objective.

1. The immediate task of the party is to hasten the accomplishment of the Democratic National Revolution. (To obviate misunderstanding, let me say that I do not visualize the process of revolutionary development as broken up into clearly demarcated stages; there will be overlapping. What I mean is that, irrespective of the possibility of direct transformation into a deeper social revolution, the revolutionary struggle in the next stages must be conducted with a democratic programme). We agree that the National Congress is historically forged as the instrument for the accomplishment of this task. And I venture to presume that *now* we further agree that, as at *present* constituted, ideologically oriented, and led, the Congress cannot serve as that instrument. Consequently, the accomplishment of the immediate task becomes conditional upon such a radicalization of the Congress as will

---

* Written and delivered in Feb. 1936. MNR.

transform it into the instrument which it is historically and potentially destined to be. But there is no historical inevitability. The subjective factor failing to react effectively upon the situation, the most favourable objective conditions do not guarantee the success of revolution.

I never had the erroneous view that the Congress is a bourgeois organization, although the fact is undeniable that its leadership has been dominated by the capitalist and the landowning interests, though not always consciously. The mistake was to confound the movement with its leadership. The leadership can always change. Nevertheless, I have always been alive to the danger of the Congress eventually becoming the party of the nationalist bourgecisie (plus landlords) which would not travel the road of bourgeois revolution. The guarantee against this danger is the rise of an alternative leadership. For the present the danger has become very imminent.

The development towards the transformation of the Congress from an objectively revolutionary mass movement to a party of the nationalist bourgeoisie began on the suspension of the C. D., and the inauguration of parliamentarianism. The development has been incredibly fast because it encountered no mass resistance. I maintain that the danger would not be so actual today, the Congress would not be so near to neo-constitutionalism, had you operated—as the organized left opposition with a definitely formulated programme of action. The false hope of converting the Congress *as such* to Socialism, persuaded you to neglect the immediate task of converting the Congress to an active, effective, instrument of democratic anti-imperialist struggle. I am sure you are always aware of the task and eager to accomplish it. The negligence was not wilful; *it was practical*, inasmuch as the tactical line [of organizing the Socialist party with the declared purpose of having the Congress adopt a socialist programme] pursued, did not put up any effective resistance to the liquidatory policy of the Congress leadership. . . .

The fact of the situation is that the organization of the Socialist party in *the present form* has prevented the union of all the radical nationalist elements (more or less discontent with the present policy of drift, if not with the leadership responsible for it) into an organized opposition advocating a definite programme of action, because the great majority of these are not prepared to stand under a Socialist flag. Anticipation of this unfortunate state of affairs compelled me to give the disagreeable advice for liquidating the Socialist Party before the erroneous course was pursued too far.

So, the immediate task of the party to capture the leadership of the Congress with the object of transforming it into such a powerful organ of mass energy as will hasten the triumph of the anti-imperialist struggle cannot be accomplished by the party as it proposes to function. This task will be accomplished by operating as the organized left wing of the

Congress. Otherwise, appearing on the political scene as a Socialist party, you tacitly agree to a division of labour. The accomplishment of the immediate task—freedom from imperialist domination—is left to the Congress leadership, while you are assuming the task of fighting for a greater freedom—a fight that will take place only in a distant future.

The result of this decision of labour is easily anticipated. Since the realization of the greater freedom is conditional upon a successful struggle against Imperialism, our march to that ultimate goal will be effectively retarded by the policy of the present Congress leadership. . . .

2. Another ground for the suggestion that those organizing the Socialist Party should operate as the organized left wing of the Congress was the obvious impossibility of a revolutionary party of the working class to function openly under the given condition of the country. The suggestion, in other words, is that the party should have dual organization. . . . Activities for the realization of the immediate minimum programme of democratic National Revolution, can be effectively conducted through the Congress and other mass organizations already in existence or to be created for the purpose.

These precautions are not only of great importance for tactical and practical purposes. They have a bearing upon the nature of the party itself. This brings me to the most serious objections to your method of organizing the Socialist party.

3. It is the danger of deviation from the path to the professed goal. It is not a question of motive. Let me assure you that I am not doubting that. But there is a logic in action as well as in thought. One step taken compels the next. A Socialist party that will be allowed legal existence in the present conditions of the country, cannot possibly perform its historic task.

Do not be deluded by the analogy of the Congress. The creed and the specification of the means—'legal and non-violent'—take the sting out of the professed goal of independence. As a matter of fact, the Congress has never repudiated constitutionalism. What is a striving to attain independence through *legal* means but constitutionalism? There is a method in the madness of our 'ministerialists'. Once the new Constitution is enacted, it is law, and by its professed creed, the Congress is committed to use it as a possible means to attain independence. Every time the Congress actively deviated from theoretical constitutionalism, it was ruthlessly suppressed, even though the deviation was a feeble effort to defy the power that be. I am not against utilizing all the possibilities of legal action. But legal existence secured at the expense of the programme of the party is not worth having. . . .

Your declared adhesion to Marxian Socialism dictates the organizational form of the party. A party organized with the purpose of realizing the programme of Marxian Socialism, is committed to revolutionary action, and therefore cannot have an open existence in this country. If the party is still tolerated, that is because it has not yet indicated its line of action. Yet the heavy hand of repression is closing upon its less cautious members. A programme, however revolutionary *theoretically*, is not worth the paper on which it is written, unless supplemented by a clear perspective of action to be undertaken in pursuance thereof. Without the necessary plan of action and the determination to act accordingly, a programme is but a collection of phrases. . . .

Profession of Marxian Socialism, however sincere, is no guarantee against the danger of deviation, unless the party *acts* according to the fundamental principles of Marxism. While proclaiming its programme, the party must open before the masses the way to the realization thereof, and there is only one way. Do you believe that this can be done if you insist upon retaining the present organizational form of the party? To put the point without mincing words: The Socialist Party can exist as an open organization if it will refrain from acting in the line dictated by its progressed programme. It is not I who is proposing liquidation. The form of organization which you have chosen will bring about the virtual liquidation of the party. Therefore, I object to it, and advocate an organizational form and method of action suitable to the given conditions in which the party shall have to operate. . . .

Why should the party run the risk of possible deviation, not wilful, but determined by this logic of action, when the peculiar conditions of the country open before it a way in which all the advantages of overt activity with a minimum programme could be had without running the risk involved in its present form of organization and mode of action? The immediate political task as well as the preparatory work necessary for its own development can be most effectively performed by the party functioning, not as a Socialist party, but as the organized left wing of the Congress. . . .

Concretely, my suggestions are: (1) In the field of nationalist politics you refrain from functioning as a Socialist party and merge yourselves in an organized left wing of the Congress; that is to say, you operate on a broader social basis not to be restricted by a party label. (2) The party itself be organizationally independent, not an adjunct to the National Congress. (3) Adoption of organizational form and method of operation suitable for a revolutionary working class party existing under the given conditions of the Imperialist terror. However, I lay special emphasis on suggestion number (1). The rest follows necessarily. Because so long as you function as a Socialist party you will be handicapped in doing the needful as regards the Congress politics, and the growth of the party as a serious political factor will be proportional to its ability in performing that. So you see, that it is an interrelated complex of problems, some political, others organizational, still others technical, others again theoretical. Consequently, they will have to be posed together to be solved. Therefore, I am compelled to suggest a change in the organizational form of the party. So, my dear comrades, you see what is actually suggested is not liquidation of the party *as such*, assuming, of course, that it will be a Marxist–Socialist party. What is suggested is a less dangerous, more effective form of organization; a form suitable to, or rather dictated by, the conditions in which the party shall operate. What is suggested, further, is a more practical tactical approach to the immediate task we are all eager to accomplish. My conviction is that a Marxian Socialist party cannot be otherwise organized in this country. . . .

I should however, add that I do not prefer the name 'Socialist', although I won't let the question of name constitute an insuperable difficulty. I am a Communist, and as such can never join a Socialist party inasmuch as this name implies the rejection of the cardinal point of Marxism—revolutionary political action. But your declaration of the principles of the party reduces the question of name to a mere formality. Marxist Socialism is identical with Communism. All Marxian Socialists, as distinct from the reformists, parliamentarian Social Democrats, are Communists even if, for some secondary reason, they may eschew the denomination. It is the essence that counts and not name. If the name 'Socialist Party' is clearly freed from the tradition of reformism, there is no serious ground for objection to it.

Finally, I desire to say a few words about the programme of action of the party—not of the party *as such* but of those composing it and the circle of their influence. . . .

Some time ago I sent a number of draft resolutions to be brought before the Lucknow Congress by the left wing. . . . I believe that the line of action traced by the resolutions, taken together, is the only alternative to the present policy. Not knowing your concrete objections to this or that particular resolution. I shall only point out the main significance of each.

I have already referred to the ambiguous nature of the object placed before the Congress. So long as that ambiguity remains, the Congress policy cannot be free from confusion fraught with the danger of deviation from the proposed goal. The resolution* on the declaration of principles removes all ambiguity about the object of the nationalist movement, defines the object in clear political terms, commits the Congress to a relentless struggle against imperialist domination in any form, and leaves no doubt about the implication of that commitment. All these basic principles of the programme of the anti-imperialist

**See* App. I. MNR.

struggle are enunciated in such a form as would not involve any formal change of creed. Only, given such a clear declaration of principles, is it possible to frame a concrete programme of action. How can an organization act effectively unless it knows what it really wants to achieve? Besides, the declaration of principles brushes aside all the cobweb of religious–ethical prejudices that confuse that basic political issue. Yet no venerable doctrine is actually stepped upon.

I need hardly say anything about the supreme importance of the resolution of the constitution of the Congress. The 'New Constitution'* is rapidly transforming the Congress into a close corporation of 'permanent officials'. Internal democracy is killed, the mass basis of membership is narrowed by foolish conditions which only put premium on hypocrisy. Under the new constitution the rise of the urgently needed alternative leadership is not possible.

My resolution on the new Constitution (the new Government of India Act) proposes to supplement the negative policy of rejection with the perspective of positive action. Otherwise rejection has no meaning, as practice is already showing. The resolution on parliamentary action suggests control over the would be ministerialists.

These general implications of the resolutions are obvious. I am sure you will find them quite in line with the accomplishment of the immediate political tasks of your party if you only gave them serious consideration. I shall go into some detail only on the question of the Constituent Assembly as there appears to be some misunderstanding and misgiving about it.[11]

The slogan of the Constituent Assembly is a practical method of challenging the self-assumed authority of the British Parliament. Unless this challenge is thrown down, the rejection of the New Constitution represents a verbal quibble bound to end in capitulation, not even compromise. How could the people be ever mobilized in the struggle for the practical assertion of the right of self-determination, if they are not clearly told how that will have to be done?

To put the question differently, who is going to decide the political fate of the Indian people? This question demands a clear answer. If the answer is not that it must be done by a body so constituted as to represent the voluntarily delegated sovereignty of the people, there is no avoiding the intervention of the British parliament, one way or the other. The burden of our activities in the next stage of the anti-imperialist struggle must be the endeavour for creating an organ of popular (democratic) power which will make the final capture of political power a practical proposition. The slogan of a Constituent Assembly is the expression of that endeavour. The next stage of the struggle shall have to be fought with that slogan which summarizes the character of the movement.

---

* Congress Constitution as amended at the Bombay session. MNR.

As regards the practicability of the slogan, in the beginning it can be but of propagandist nature, and so the question of practical difficulties does not arise. In the propagandist period, the purpose served will be posing of the political problem, clear formulation of the basic issue of the struggle for Independence, putting in the ideal of Independence a concrete political content.

The argument that Imperialism will never permit the convocation of a Constituent Assembly is irrelevant. Who says it will? And who wants a Constituent Assembly that can rise without challenging the position of Imperialism, except as a popular instrument for the capture of power, except as the framework of the revolutionary State? The slogan of the Constituent Assembly can be rejected from the one side by those who discountenance the perspective of the capture of power. They don't really stand for Independence notwithstanding whatever they say. From the other side, by those who believe that it is possible to jump over a whole historical period, that the proletarian revolution can become an actual historical fact before socio-political conditions for it have been created. They are the official Communists trying to make a revolution to order—manufacturing it out of infantile enthusiasm and perverse imagination.

If the radical elements still fail to raise the basic political issue which alone can open up a line of concrete action, well, then the movement is still less mature that it appears. Its development will be delayed. The slogan will have to become the expression of the urge of the movement before it can go further. Seven years of plodding was necessary before the slogan was even formally adopted. It may require still another several years of plodding before its significance and historical necessity will be fully appreciated.

So, I can only make an earnest appeal. Those serious about the ideal of Independence, must be armed with a fully worked out plan of action. All the moves and counter-moves must be calculated. It is not possible to set forth such a plan in correspondence. Therefore, I can only ask you to believe when I say that I shall be able to point out the practicability of the line I advocate. Meanwhile, you are asked to carry on the propaganda with the slogan. Of course, if you cannot trust me, there is nothing more to say. I must patiently wait for my chance. But I am so very firmly convinced of the correctness of the line suggested that I can wait for the chance when I shall be in the position to secure its adoption by all the radical–democratic–socialist elements. You should remember that my suggestions are based upon practical experience in actual revolutionary struggle; an experience possessed by few in this country.

February 1936 M. N. Roy

Note

[11] Roy's proposal of a Constituent Assembly, circulated initially in 1930, and included in *Our Task in India* (1932), was in fact substantially incorporated in the Plan of Action of the Constitution of the Congress Socialist Party. At its founding Congress the CSP resolved that 'the right of framing the Constitution is the sovereign right of the Indian people . . . and the supreme authority which should promulgate the Constitution of India is the Constituent Assembly'. In consonance with Roy's Manifesto, the CSP also envisaged the Constituent Assembly as 'the culmination of a mass uprising against foreign rule'. *Congress Socialist Party: Constitution, Programme and Resolutions*, 1934; Thomas A. Rusch, 'Role of the Congress Socialist Party in the Indian National Congress', Chicago, 1955. SNR.

Appendix I

Declaration of Principles

1. The Congress as a movement represents the will of the Indian people to democratic national freedom. As an organization, it is the instrument, created by the oppressed masses, for the enforcement of this will to freedom.

2. The Congress stands for the democratic principles of self-determination. Its object is the establishment in India of a Government of the people, by the people.

3. By a democratic government, the Congress understands a government under the effective control of the majority of the people so that freedom, progress, and prosperity are guaranteed equally to the entire community.

4. The Congress is of the opinion that rapid industrialization is the only remedy for ending the poverty of the Indian masses as well as all other economic evils.

But a full and free industrial expansion is impossible in a colonial country, crabbed and confined within the iron framework of an Imperialist regime. The attainment of Complete Independence is, therefore, an urgent historic necessity for India.

Appendix II

Programme of National Democratic Revolution

1. On the strength of historical experience and proved economic theories, the Congress holds the opinion that antiquated forms of non-productive (feudal, semi-feudal, sacerdotal, etc.) ownership of land are obstacles to the normal economic development of the country. A revolution in the relation of property in the main means of production, the transfer of ownership from the non-productive rent-receivers to those directly concerned with the actual production is demanded by national welfare and prosperity.

2. The Congress is in agreement with the generally established economic theory that industrial expansion and commercial activity of a country are limited by the power of consumption of its people. Therefore the Congress believes that it is the fundamental duty of a democratic government to take measures calculated to increase the purchasing power of the masses. The following are some of the measures urgently required in India:

(a) Transfer of the ownership of land to the peasant.

(b) To relieve the burden of the peasantry to such an extent as would leave them in possession of no less than 80 per cent of the gross produce.

(c) Legally guaranteed minimum wages to assure an irreducible standard of living (representing a corresponding purchasing power) to those working in the fields, factories, mines, transport, office, school, etc.

(d) Extensive public works, and industrial undertakings by the State for the productive employment of the huge mass of wasted labour.

3. The Congress believes that it is the duty of a democratic government to foster industrial and commercial prosperity. But as a democratic movement the Congress is opposed to the exploitation of man by man. Nor would it permit the accumulation of national wealth in the possession of a few, accentuating the misery of the majority. Therefore it stands for industrial democracy and equitable distribution of national wealth to be guaranteed through:

(a) Public (national, municipal, or local) ownership of the modern means of transportation.

(b) Government supervision of mining and other heavy industries in return for financial aid such as credit facilities, subsidies, etc.

(c) State control over banking and credit.

(d) Social insurance.

4. The Congress considers the freedom of press, speech, and association as an elementary right of democratic citizenship. It declares its determination to fight relentlessly for this elementary right.

5. The Congress believes that it is the duty of a democratic government to provide free secular education to all children below 15 years of age.

6. The Congress stands for equal political, economic, and social rights for women.

7. The Congress deplores communal distrust and misunderstanding, and is decidedly of the opinion that the Hindus should meet the minority religious communities farther than half-way. The Congress will work on this principle in order to unite the oppressed masses, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, depressed classes, etc. under the common plan of democratic national freedom so essential for the welfare of all.

Appendix III

Suggested Amendments to the Constitution of the National Congress

In view of the fact that the struggle for national freedom has entered a new stage in which different methods and forms of combat will have to be adopted, the Congress revolves that its constitution and organizational structure should be amended on the following lines:

1. Effective control of the leadership through the rank and file membership. This will be secured through the introduction of the system of the executive reporting to the Congress, so that the delegates elected by the membership will have the chance of examining, criticizing, approving or condemning the actions of the leaders. Severe criticism or condemnation by a majority, of the report of the Executive will mean a vote of no-confidence, and the old leadership must make way for the new, chosen by the delegates in Congress assembled.

2. From the next, the ceremonious opening of each annual session will be followed, instead of the presidential address, by the Report of the A.I.C.C. in which an account of the past year's activities (political as well as organizational), and the defence of these, whenever necessary, will be accompanied by an exhaustive review of the political situation of the moment, an indication of possible development, and a proposed line of action to be pursued in the ensuing year. After a free and full discussion by the delegates, the proposed line will be amended, rejected, or accepted by a majority vote. This method will guarantee the collective nature of the leadership, and rank and file control of policy, both being so very essential for a democratic movement.

3. The report of the A.I.C.C. will be made by the General Secretary. It will be prepared by the Working Committee, and approved by the A.I.C.C. in its session meeting on the eve of the Congress.

4. The Subject Committee is abolished. Resolutions for the consideration of the Congress shall be sent in to the Working Committee either by the A.I.C.C. collectively or by a group (not less than 15) of its members, or by the Provincial Congress Committee, or fractions thereof. Draft resolutions shall be submitted at least two months ahead of the Congress sessions so that they could be given due publicity and circulated to all local organizations to enable them to discuss and give proper instructions to their delegates to the Congress. At the opening session of the Congress one or more committees, composed of delegates, shall be set up, and to these the draft resolutions shall be referred for careful scrutiny. The plenary sessions will discuss the resolutions on the

report of the committees. Finally, these will be adopted by a majority vote. Any group of delegates (not less than 15) shall have the right to introduce emergency resolutions. The Secretariat shall also have similar right.

5. The maximum number of delegates to the Congress will be 1,500. The delegates shall be elected by the membership in mass meetings in which the draft resolutions submitted to the Congress will be discussed. The discussions will impart to the delegates the spirit of their constituents.

6. The A.I.C.C. will be composed of 150 members and 50 substitute members. One half of the number shall be elected from the floor of the Congress, the other half elected by Provincial conferences which will be held immediately after the Congress. The A.I.C.C. shall meet every three months. The secretariat will have the power to convene an emergency meeting on a week's notice whenever there will be demand from 20 or more members of the A.I.C.C.

7. The Working Committee will be composed of 15 members and 5 substitutes. It will meet monthly, and oftener when necessary, the convener always being the General Secretary who will be a member of the Working Committee.

8. There shall be a secretariat of 5 members, including the General Secretary and the Organizational Secretary. Of the rest, one shall be in charge of agitation and propaganda, another shall be liaison officer between the Congress Executive and the Workers' and Peasants' organizations, and other affiliated bodies;* and the third shall act as the coordinator of the parliamentary activities in different provinces. The secretariat shall be in permanent session, and its members shall be recompensated, if necessary. The secretariat, assisted by an efficient staff, and under the supervision of the Working Committee, shall function as the motor for the day-to-day activities of the entire movement throughout the country, in cooperation with the provincial secretariats. The General Secretary shall be elected by the Congress at the close of the annual session.

9. Acceptance of the democratic principles of the Congress and payment of a minimum monthly contribution of one anna shall make everybody eligible to individual membership.

10. To guarantee an organized mass basis for the Congress, the system of collective or group membership shall be introduced. All organizations, groups, and clubs formed with democratic and progressive purposes such as trade unions, workers' clubs, peasants' organizations, students' bodies, socialist or communist associations, co-operative societies, small

* When *affiliation* becomes permissible without prejudice to organizational cohesion or the solidarity of the movement. MNR.

tradesmen's and artisans' guilds, literary and cultural bodies, etc. will be entitled to affiliation with the Congress on the acceptance of its principles. All the rights and obligations associated with the individual membership of the Congress shall accrue to all members of any affiliated* body.

January 1935

---

* *See* the footnote to Letter No. 1 signed. MNR.

Appendix IV[12]

(*From* : 'How to oppose the J. P. C. Report—
A call for a broad *United Front*').

[Five paragraphs deleted. The reprinted text here starts from the sixth paragraph of the 1937 edition SNR.]

A BROAD UNITED FRONT

A slave constitution is being forged for India. We have to mobilize the broadest possible strata of the Indian people for an agitation against it. It is necessary to build as broad-based a united front as possible. All the elements of the Indian population who are against imperialist absolutism must be brought together on a common platform for voicing their dissatisfaction against the proposed constitution. This cannot be done by an empty talk of rejection, nor can it be done by romantic talks about general strike and peasant revolt which can hardly be said to be matters of practical politics *in the immediate present*. Let us act as realists and exploit the possibilities of the situation in the best interest of our common struggle for Independence.

THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

The course suggested is, therefore, as follows:

(1) Setting up of a broad anti-imperialist united front for an agitation against the proposed Constitution.

(2) The platform of the united front to consist of a condemnation of the proposed constitution *and* the demand for the incorporation of the following *minimum* demands:

(a) Universal adult franchise for central as well as provincial legislatures; (b) single-chamber legislature; (c) full Provincial autonomy and Responsibility at the centre; (d) no safeguards, commercial or otherwise; (e) no special or emergency powers to the Governors or the Governor-General; (f) constitutional guarantees for freedom of press, speech, assembly, and association, minimum wage, employment benefit, 8 hour day, freedom of strikes, protection of minorities, etc.; (g) full rights of citizenship to States people, the representatives of these to the Federal assembly being elected by universal adult franchise; (h) investing the Indian Legislature with the right of extending or modifying the Constitution.

(3) This platform to be popularized and ratified by meetings and demonstrations all over the country.

DESERTIONS WILL NOT WEAKEN

Efforts must be made for bringing into the united front as many elements as possible, especially the Muslims, by the practical acceptance of the Communal Award. It is likely that some of the constituent elements of the united front may desert it when they actually see the sweep of the movement and realize its potentialities, or may be bought off by Imperialism by the grant of some concession. But once it gains a certain momentum the mass movement will not suffer by these desertions. These desertions, on the contrary, will help the clarification of issues and the differentiation of classes which will, instead of weakening, contribute to the growth of the movement. A mass agitation carried on the lines suggested will be a fitting answer to the insolent challenge of British Imperialism, will be an impressive demonstration of popular will, and will materially help the mobilization of the masses as a condition for the conquest of power. . . .

---

[12] The three Round Table Conferences (1930–2) were followed by the publication of a White Paper in March 1933 by His Majesty's Government in London. The proposals embodied in the White Paper were referred to a Joint Committee of the two Houses of the British Parliament which produced a Report. Appendix IV refers to this Report. The Government of India Act 1935, introduced as a bill in Parliament on 19 December 1934 on the basis of the White Paper, was passed on 2 August 1935. Sir M. Gwyer and A. Appadorai, *Speeches and Documents on the Indian Constitution 1921–57*, 2 Vol., 1957.

The opening five and last two paragraphs of this appendix have been left out, and this is indicated by an ellipsis (. . .). SNR.

SELECTED WORKS PART II

Selections from the Prison Manuscripts (1931–36)

Materialism
The Historical Role of Islam
Heresies of the Twentieth Century
Fascism
The Memoirs of a Cat
India's Message
Crime and Karma
The Ideal of Indian Womanhood
Science and Philosophy
On Stepping out of Jail

Introductory editorial note

This part of the fourth volume comprises selections from Roy's Prison Manuscripts, of which the earliest entry is dated 16 November 1931. They were written in different jails over a period of nearly five years. Roy was given a limited number of sheets at a time which had to be submitted to the prison authorities before new ones were issued. The sheets were bound into volumes, each of which carried a certificate of clearance from the respective jail superintendent. There was nothing illegal or clandestine about these writings, and Roy was allowed to take them with him when he was released on 20 November 1936. The total number of these bound prisons manuscript volumes, is nine. Roy subsequently took out portions from these manuscripts, and edited and published several of them as separate books. Since very few readers are likely to see the original manuscripts which are now preserved in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in New Delhi, I give below in brief some details regarding them.

Volume 1

Contains a total of 140 lined foolscap size sheets of paper, certified on the verso of sheet no. 1 by Superintendent Jail, Cawnpore, dated 16. XI. 31. Roy wrote here, as in every other volume, on both sides of each sheet, normally in the usual sequential order. However, presumably due to the binder's error and negligence on the part of the jail authorities, in some of the volumes the sequential order was not properly maintained. In this volume, after the first 64 sheets (paginated 1 to 128) the remaining sheets (65 to 140) were placed in the reverse order. This means sheet no. 140 is placed after sheet no. 64 and the volume ends on sheet no. 65. There are extensive notes, extracts, theses, and lists of books; much of the writing is occupied with materialism and a historical survey of major philosophical systems. Sheet no. 19 bears a tentative title of the projected work: 'Materialism: A Popular Exposition of the Scientific View of Nature, Life and History', and a provisional table of contents consisting of 15 chapters.

Volume 2

Inside cover page: 'Book contains one hundred and ninety leaves certified by Superintendent, Central Prison, Bareilly, dated 24/ 6/ 32.' From sheet no. 1 to no. 85 the writing is continuous (except that sheet nos. 77 verso and 78 are continuation of sheet no. 177); then is placed sheet no. 185, and the arrangement from then on is in the reverse order to sheet no. 86; at the end are sheet nos. 186 to 190. The project indicated in Volume I is continued in Volume II which begins with an examination of Sankhya philosophy, presents the ideas of Sankaracharya, the rationalist thinkers of Islam, and the post-renaissance philosophers of the West (Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Hegel), and opens a discussion of 'Materialism and Relativity' ('to be continued in volume III'). This volume also includes the complete draft of 'Historical Role of Islam', later edited and published as a separate book.

Volume 3

The name and location of the jail are not given, but the Superintendent's signature and the date when the volume was passed (6. 1. 33) indicate that the location was Central Prison, Bareilly, from where Roy wrote letters to Ellen on 7. 12. 32 and 9. 1. 33. The total number of sheets is 190. Sheet no. 1 opens with a revised title of the projected work: 'Materialism: An Outline of the History of Scientific Thought' which Roy retained in the published work. The major part of the volume is devoted to a critical examination of Christianity and 'the Spiritualist West', and it discusses a variety of anti-materialist positions, among them neo-Kantianism, Vitalism, empirio-criticism, pragmatism, religion, mysticism, and fascism. There are some pages where the writing is in reverse order (verso of sheet nos. 186 to 167), and others, indicating that the discussion of a particular topic is continued elsewhere. Cross-references both backwards and forwards denoting interrupted continuities occur in virtually every volume.

Volume 4

This volume also does not give details of location, but from the Superintendent's signature, dated 11. 12. 33, and the supportive evidence of *Letters from Jail*, the place definitely is Central Prison, Bareilly. In his letter to Ellen of 23 December 1933 from Central Prison, Bareilly, Roy wrote that he had renamed his book 'Spiritualism of the Western Civilization', and that it had already become too big to be 'An introduction to the Outline of the History of Scientific Thought'. The volume consists of 140 sheets; the very opening sheet gives the title 'The Spiritual West by M. N. Roy' and the provisional table of contents. The first section deals with logical mysticism, metaphysical deviations of the physicists, the theory of uncertainty, biology, and teleology, and how rationalism is overwhelmed by spiritualist prejudice; the second section is a critique of both Christianity and Hinduism, especially of Sanatan Dharma and Gandhi, and it sees India's deliverance in the revival of a materialist philosophy.

Volume 5

'Certified that this book contains 503 pages. Pages 326, 327 and 328 numbered in duplicate. Superintendent, Almora District Jail, 8. 9. 34.' There is a second signature dated 24. 10. 34, Central Priosn, Bareilly. From Roy's letter we know he was transferred to Almora in May and shifted back to Bareilly in October. At Almora, for more than two months, he was 'not allowed to have any blank paper, pen or even pencil' (Letter of 18 July 1934). The volume opens with a new title: 'Philosophy, Religion and Science, Vol I, Western Spiritualism.'

It is stated that the volume is in continuation of Volume 4. A very substantial portion of the book is occupied with a refutation of those claiming modern science to be in crisis and offering idealist solutions. The principal topics covered are: the Theory of Uncertainty, the Doctrine of Creation, Appearance and Reality, Space and Time, Contemporary Science and Spritualism. In between there is a section entitled 'Some Reflections of a Cat', published later as a separate book under the title *The Memoirs of a Cat*. This manuscript is written in green ink (already somewhat faded).

Volume 6

'Certified that the notebook contains 251 pages, Superintendent District Jail, Dehra Dun.' Actually the total number given is not of 'pages' but of leaves or sheets, the total of pages being 251×2=502; the last two pages are blank. The volume gives no date, but from the *Letters* we know that Roy was transferred to District Jail, Dehra Dun in May 1935. It opens with the title 'The Philosophical Consequences of Modern Science', gives eleven chapter headings, and indicates that the argument is 'Continued from Notebook 5'.

Volume 7

'Certified that this book contains 235 leaves. Superintendent District Jail, Dehra Dun, 5. 12. 35.' The plan of the work is now more clearly stated on the first page. The book is to have the general title: 'Philosophy, Religion and Science.' 'The Philosophical Consequences' in eleven chapters is to constitute Volume II of this work; and the third volume entitled 'Social Significance of Spritualism' is to have six chapters in the following order: 'The Decline of the West', 'Indian Mysticism and Western Idealism', 'The Philosophy of the Geeta', 'Sanatan Dharma', 'Gandhism', and 'Civilization and Culture', This volume is a continuation of volume 6 and discusses Substance, Causality, and Theory of Knowledge, but also includes notes on Transmigration of Soul, India's Message, Crime and Karma.

Volume 8

'Certified that this notebook contains 238 leaves. Superintendent, District Jail, Dehra Dun, 28. 4. 36.' The argument from vol. 7 is continued in this volume, the first hundred pages being devoted to the theory of knowledge. The first page also carried M. N. Roy's signature dated 1 May 1936. In the second half of the manuscript there are notes on Crime and Karma, Love and Lust, Place of Women, and on biology and psychology.

Volume 9

'Certified that this book contains 235 leaves. Superintendent, District Jail, Dehra Dun, 11. 8. 36. Continues the study of psychology—notes on the brain and its functions, instinct, intelligence, perception, sensation, memory, volition,

> language, judgment of values and personality. Mentions various schools—psychoanalysis, Freud and Jung; Pavlov and behavourism, Gestalt theory. This is followed by a long essay on 'The Ideal of Indian Womanhood' (later published separately as a book); and thereafter notes on 'Heresies of the Twentieth Century Physics' and on 'Psychology of the Seer'. In the bound volume, after the first six pages of closely written notes, pages 7 to 134 are left blank, and then from page 135 to page 235 both sides of each leaf is covered with handwritten notes (except for 3 pages left blank at various places).

The brief description above, I hope, gives some indication of the range of Roy's studies and intellectual explorations during the jail years as well as of the inner unity of his pursuit. On a rough estimate, the nine volumes have a total of 3, 750 closely handwritten pages. Roy had hoped to organize the thoughts, arguments, and materials which filled these pages into a philosophical treatise of three volumes. His stormy political career which was resumed almost immediately after his release, and which continued for the next ten years, did not allow him to undertake this demanding task, but he published substantial portions of the manuscripts in the form of separate books and articles, and incorporated some of the materials in his last work, *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*.

In making the selection for this part of volume IV I have followed the text of the books as edited and published by Roy himself. Comparing each book with the prison manuscripts, it has been by and large possible to locate the particular volumes from which the main part of that book is drawn and to indicate the years when it was originally composed in draft form. The prison volume number and date for each book have been given in the table of contents. However, not every part of each book has been located; fragments of some are scattered in several volumes and in some cases segments were rewritten, added, or omitted by Roy before he got those books published.

Hopefully, some day the complete text of the prison volumes will be carefully and competently edited for eventual publication when all the relevant details will be noted and recorded by the editor.

SNR.

Selections from
MATERIALISM
An Outline of the History
of
Scientific Thought

(Chapter III and VI)

Introductory editorial note

In his very first letter from jail to Ellen Gottschalk (11 August 1931) Roy wrote: 'I should like to make a special study of the History of Materialism and of the cultural importance of the Middle Ages.' He found Lange's *History of Materialism* unsatisfactory. Much of the first three volumes of the Prison Manuscripts is occupied with the history and philosophy of materialism, with criticism of its vulgarizers, and with refutation of transcendentalists, idealists, and religious revivalists. Although at a later phase Roy moved 'beyond Communism', he never gave up his materialist philosophy, making it the basis of his philosophy of New Humanism.

From these early volumes of the Prison Manuscripts, Roy brought together and edited the relevant material which was published as a book entitled *Materialism* in July 1940. In February 1951 a revised second edition was published to which Roy wrote a 'preface' and added two new chapters. It now consisted of nine chapters and an appendix. The chapter headings were as follows:
1. Philosophy, Metaphysics and Theology 2. The Origin of Materialism 3. Materialism in Indian Philosophy 4. Rationalism, Materialism and Idealism 5. Post-Hegelian Philosophy 6. Modern Materialism 7. The Crisis of Materialism 8. Materialism and Twentieth Century Physics 9. Materialism and Practical Idealism.

In jail Roy did not have access to texts in Sanskrit and had to rely on English versions for his quotations and references. For the revised second edition Tarkateerth Laxman Shastri Joshi prepared the appendix, giving the original quotations and source references in Sanskrit.

I have included in this volume two chapters from this work, one on 'Materialism in Indian Philosophy' (Ch. III) and the other on 'Modern Materialism' (Ch. VI); also Roy's Preface to the revised second edition. From the appendix prepared by Tarkateerth Joshi I have included the titles and *sutra* numbers of the sources in the notes to chapter III but omitted the Sanskrit quotations. Havell's and Hiuen Tsang's (Yuan Chwang) books were specifically mentioned by Roy. In Chapter VI, the footnotes have been serially numbered and included at the end of the chapter as Notes; otherwise they remain as they appear in the revised second edition. A few sentences and paragraphs have been omitted; these are indicated by ellipses (. . .).

SNR.

Preface

To the Second Edition

Since the book was written in 1934, and first published in 1940, religious revivalism has gained ground in philosophical thought. Mystic and irrationalist tendencies have become more and more pronounced even in social philosophy and political theories. These developments are the symptoms of an intellectual crisis. Unbounded scepticism about the objective validity of scientific knowledge, about the scope of the cognitive faculty, has destroyed man's faith in himself. Sensitive minds are tormented by the imaginary uncertainties of value judgement. The bewildered bulk of the civilized mankind can see only two ways out of a wilderness of intellectual confusion and the resulting moral chaos: one is the lure of protection offered by the totalitarian State (of any kind), and the certainty of a regimented economic, social, and cultural life; the other is religious revivalism. The former is rejected by all who believe that social justice is compatible with individual liberty. But only a few realize that religious revivalism means lowering of the standard of the revolt of man against spiritual slavery; that it will be a return to medievalism in search of certainty and security in blind faith.

Doubt about the possibility of a non-transcendental metaphysics logically compels one to seek the criterion of truth and sanction of morality in the supra-sensual world of delusion or in the dreamland of mystic experience. Unless the sanction of morality is found in man himself, the cry for a return to rationality and moral behaviour in public life will be a cry in the wilderness. In other words, man must regain the faith in himself, if modern civilization is to overcome the present crisis.

Man must believe either in himself or in god—a non-ego, something other than himself and beyond his comprehension. The mystic, incomprehensible something may be placed outside, to be worshipped as God or contemplated as the Cosmic Principle of Universal Harmony or the Moral Order or Metaphysical Unity. In that case, we have an essentially teleological view of the world which cannot admit of freedom, as either choice or man's creativeness. Alternatively, the mystic, incomprehensible, metaphysical category, which belongs neither to the world of matter nor of ideas, is placed inside man—as intuition. In that case, we have mysticism. All ultra-modern philosophical systems, which may not advocate out-and-out religious revivalism, directly or indirectly lead to mysticism. Placing intuition above intelligence, they glorify irrationalism. The fascist theoreticians appealed to biology and anthropology for a scientific sanction of their contempt for human personality and individual freedom.

Man will be helped to regain faith in himself by a philosophy which bases ethics on rationality, and, in the light of scientific knowledge, traces the roots of man's rationality through the entire process of biological evolution, to Reason in Nature. The fundamental principles of such a philosophy for the future were formulated as Materialism, a system of thought developed ever since the dawn of civilization.

For various difficulties, the publication of the bigger book, *The Philosophical Consequences of Modern Science* may still be delayed for some time. Therefore, for the second edition this introductory essay has been enlarged by two chapters; and the old text elaborated in many places.

I am thankful to Pandit Laxman Shastri Tarkateerth, for having prepared the notes on the sources of the quotations from Sanskrit texts.

Dehra Dun
February 1951

M. N. Roy

III Materialism in Indian Philosophy

In India the dissatisfaction with the Vedic Natural Religion gave rise to speculations about the origin of things. Some of the earlier Upanishads are fragmentary records of those speculations. . . .

Towards the close of the misty Vedic era, approximately about the seventh or eighth century BC, there rose thinkers who represented distinct materialist tendencies. The teachings of those early speculative rebels are almost completely lost. Only the general drift of the currents of their thought can be approximately inferred from the works of their orthodox opponents. There is, however, ample evidence to conclude that the two earlier systems of Hindu philosophy—Vaisheshika and Sankhya—were the positive outcome of the speculations recorded fragmentarily and rather enigmatically in the earlier Upanishads. The Vedic society was in the process of dissolution. The pastoral tribal organization, under priestly domination, was buttressed ideologically on the natural religion of the Vedas. The ideology of the forces making for its dissolution was expressed by the philosophers who challenged the authority of the gods by trying to explain the being and becoming of the world in a rationalist and materialist way.[1]

All the existing schools of philosophy mention earlier thinkers as 'heretics' or 'nihilists'.[2] The former had denied the authority of the Vedas; the latter doubted if anything existed at all. According to the Sankhyas, the 'nihilists' held:

> Since nothing really exists, except thought, neither does bondage exist; just as the things of a dream have no real existence. Therefore, it [bondage] has no cause; for it is absolutely false. The reality is a void. What is, perishes, because to perish is the habit of things. The void alone is the reality. Since everything that exists, perishes, and that which is perishable is false, as in a dream, bondage has merely a momentary existence, is phenomenal, and not real. Therefore, who can be bound by that? Nothing continues after quitting its own nature; therefore, nothing could continue in existence, if it ceased to perish [that is, ceased to have its nature].[3]

From such fragmentary records, it is very difficult to reconstruct the whole system. But to do so obviously is essential for the composition of a complete history of ancient Indian thought. For the moment, the fragmentary evidence clearly proves that the speculative efforts made to outgrow the childishness of the Vedic Natural Religion did not directly develop into the metaphysical conceptions recorded in the existing Upanishads. There was a distinct tendency of development in the opposite direction. Not only was the authority of Vedas boldly challenged, but the earlier forms of metaphysical thought were subjected to ridicule, and the denial of the Gods or supernatural agencies was stretched to the logical conclusion of denying the existence of everything, since this latter depended on the existence of imaginary metaphysical entities.

The Upanishads record not only strands of rationalist, naturalist, and agnostic thought, but also out-and-out atheism and materialism. At least one of the main eighteen books is entirely devoted to an exposition of rationalist and naturalist thinking and the most outspoken heretical views. It denies the existence of God and soul; it holds that nothing but matter exists, and that there is no other world beyond this world. Its thesis can be summarized as follows:

> There is no incarnation, no God, no heaven, no hell; all traditional religious literature is the work of conceited fools; nature, the originator, and time, the destroyer, are the rulers of things, and take no account of virtue or vice, in awarding happiness or misery to men; people deluded by flowery speeches cling to God's temples and priests when, in reality, there is no difference between Vishnu and a dog.

The origin of the naturalist and sceptic thought developed in some of the major Upanishads; indeed, can be traced even in the Rig Veda; for instance, the Creation Hymn which concludes the dialogue between the parents of mankind—the twin brother and sister, Yama and Yami.

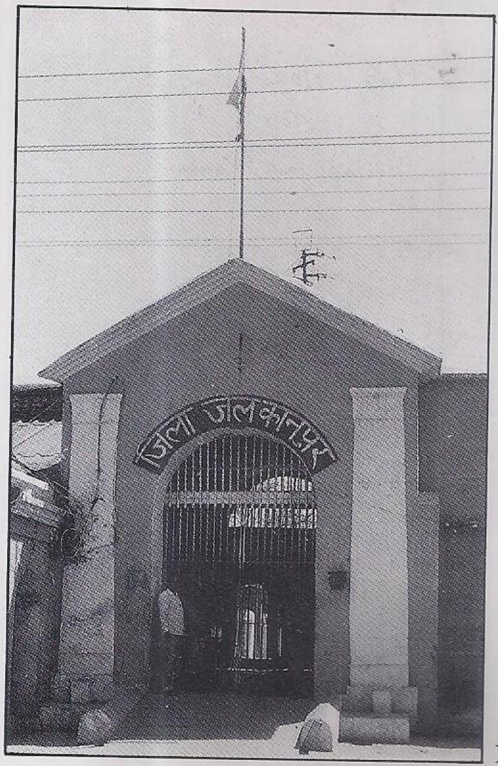
The Vedas themselves also furnish the evidence of heretical naturalist thought growing already in the Vedic times. There are Vedic hymns which refer to heretics and unbelievers. They evidently were the pioneers of the revolt against the natural religion and as such forefathers of Indian philosophy. As in ancient Greece, so in India also, the first attempts of human intellect to explain nature in natural terms gave birth to philosophy; that means, in India also originally, philosophy was materialist. The Vedas and the earlier Upanishads refer to the Swabhavavadins (naturalists) and their doctrines. They disputed the reality of the gods of natural religion and scoffed at the pretensions of the priests. From the scant references made only to refute them, it can be inferred that those early pioneers of Indian philosophy were empiricists; they held that perception was the only source of knowledge as well as the only reliable evidence. Therefore, they were called *darsanikas*, and the term subsequently came to mean philosopher. The Sanskrit word *darsana* means perception. The authorship of the *lokayata darsana*, the earliest Indian philosophy, is traditionally ascribed to the legendary figure of Brihaspati—the preceptor of the gods. The legend indicates that in the olden days the naturalist rebels against blind faith and orthodoxy were held in high esteem. The fact that Brihaspati has gone down in history also as the founder of the Charvak system developed in a later period as the culmination of the materialist thought in ancient India, proves that until the fall of Buddhism, that is, for more than a thousand years, materialism was a continuous current of thought in ancient India. The fundamental principles of the *lokayata darasana* (Indian materialism), as it developed over this long period, were recorded as follows by Krishna Misra, who was a younger contemporary of Buddha:

> In it only perceptual evidence is authority. The elements are earth, water, fire and air, wealth and enjoyment are the objects of human existence. Matter can think. There is no other world. Death is the end of all.

The Ramayana records the story of Javali—the sceptic and sophist who questioned faith and scriptural laws. The Mahabharata also denounces 'doubters and atheists who deny the reality of soul'. They 'wander over the whole earth'; they were 'rationalists, critics of the Vedas, revilers of the Brahmans'. The Gita also refers to heretics who deny the existence of God.

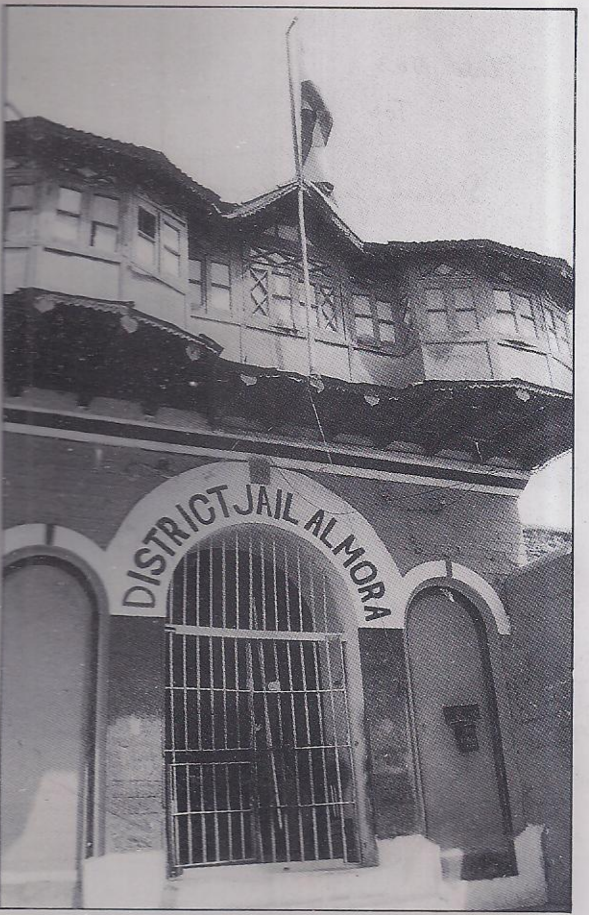
Nihilism was the ideology of the dissolution of antique society in India. It was revolutionary in the sense that it was a mighty revolt against Vedic priestcraft; but as a school of philosophical thought, it was sterile. Nevertheless, it very greatly influenced Buddhist philosophy. The need to dispute the nihilist doctrine promoted the rise of materialistic tendency. Indian materialism rose as reaction to nihilism. The materialist schools of Indian philosophy represented currents of thought evidently stimulated by nihilism. In order to dispute the doctrine that nothing existed, it was necessary to rely upon the existence of the material world which no sensible person could possibly dispute. The connection between nihilism and the outspokenly materialistic Vaisheshika system still remains a mater of investigation. But its connection with the quasi-materialist Sankhya system is quite evident. In their fight against the nihilists, the Sankhyas were driven very close to out and out materialism. In order to prove the reality of some existence, Kapila had to fall back upon the material world. The existence of thought by itself, or that of disembodied spirits, could not be proved to the satisfaction of the sceptics who expounded their nihilist doctrines as the logical deductions from the early spiritualist cult which was being set up in order to drug the victims of social chaos, so that they might ignore the miseries of this world as bad dreams. Therefore, more tangible evidence for the reality of existence had to be produced. The rebels and revolutionaries of ancient India thus made the rise of a philosophy possible. In order to prove the existence of thought, Kapila, for example, had to refer the reality of thought to the reality of the external world. His highly materialistic theory of cognition was also developed under the powerful impact of nihilism.[4]

M. N. Roy in Europe in November 1930 (a silhouette)

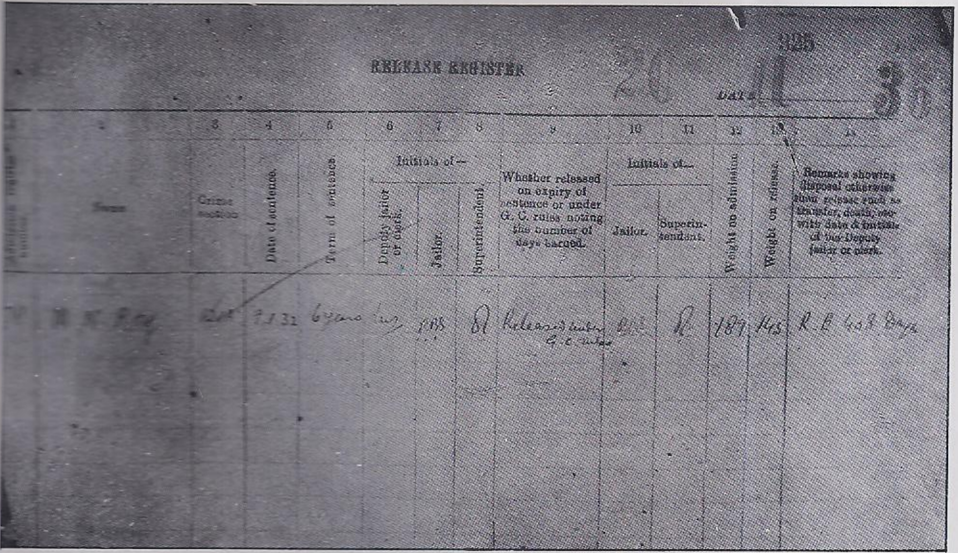


District Jail, Kanpur

Central Prison, Bareilly District Jail



District Jail, Almorah



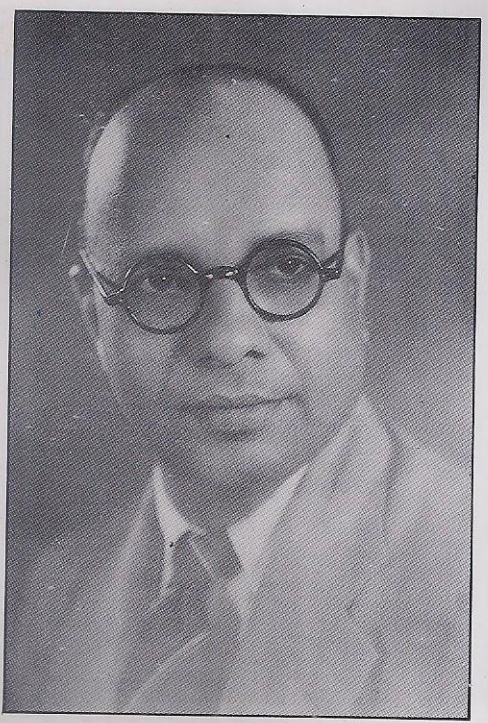
RELEASE REGISTER

DATE 20 11 36

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
[illegible]	Name	Crime section	Date of sentence	Term of sentence	Initials of — Deputy Jailor or clerk	Jailor	Superintendent	Whether released on expiry of sentence or under G. C. rules noting the number of days earned	Initials of— Jailor	Superintendent	Weight on admission	Weight on release	Remarks showing disposal otherwise than release such as transfer, death, etc. with date & initials of the Deputy Jailor or clerk.
	M. N. Roy	121A	9.1.32	6 years Imp		RBB	R	Released under G. C. rules	RBB	R	187	145	R. B. 458 Days

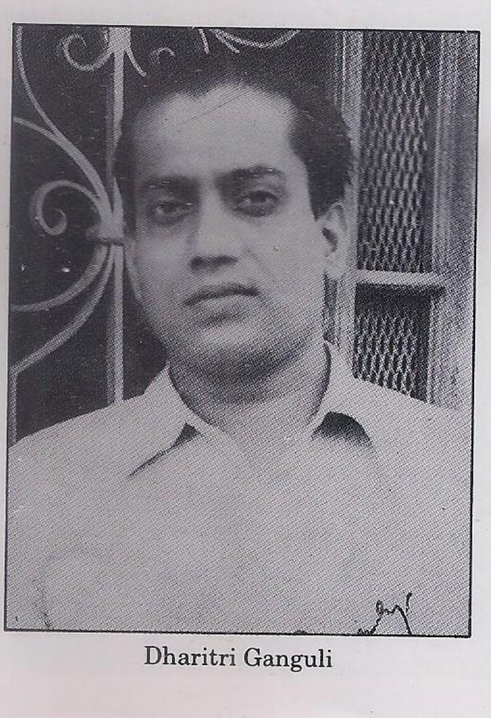
Release Register, District Jail, Dehra Dun

A. N. 'Pathan' Shetty



C.Y. Chitnis

Rajani Mukerji

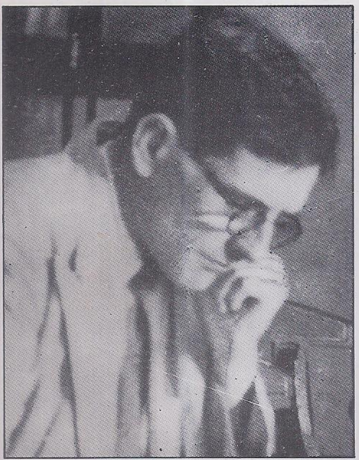


Dharitri Ganguli

C.Y. Chitnis

Dharitri Ganguli

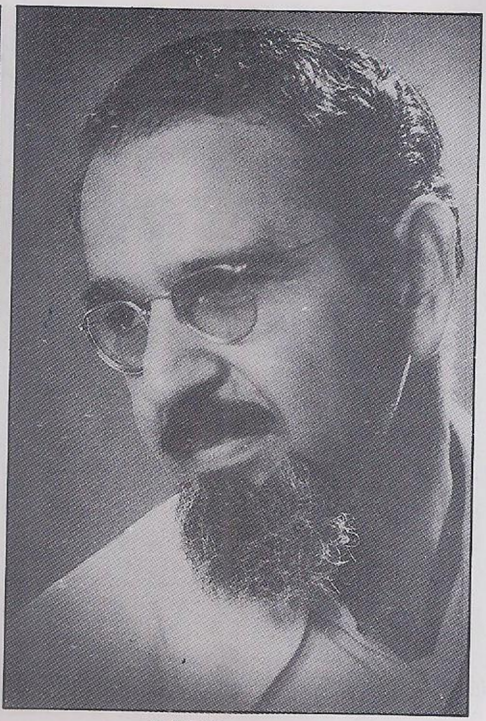
A.K. Pillai


Philip Spratt

Jibanlal Chattopadhyay

Ram Singh

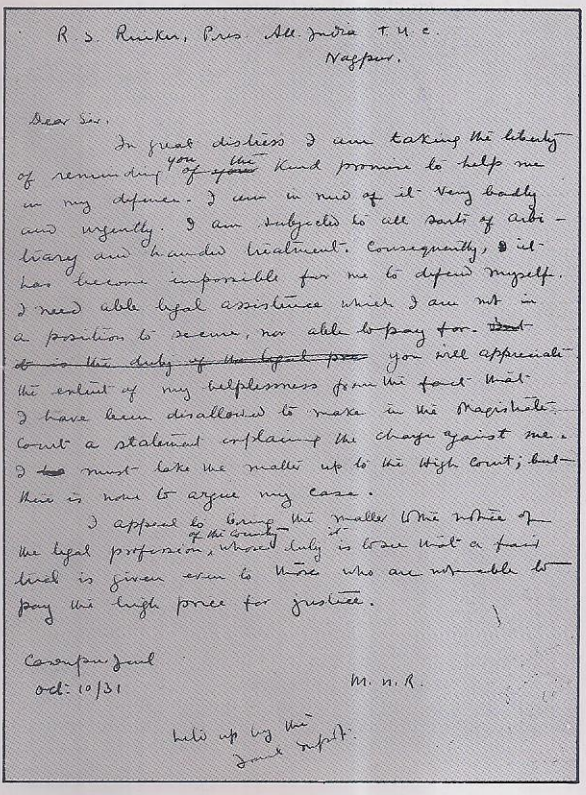
Laxman Shastri Joshi



S.H. Vatsyayan

Sudhindra Nath Datta

Benoyendra Nath Banerji



R. S. Ruiker, Pres. All India T.U.C.
Nagpur.

Dear Sir,

In great distress I am taking the liberty of reminding you ~~of your~~ the kind promise to help me in my defence. I am in need of it very badly and urgently. I am subjected to all sorts of arbitrary and handed treatment. Consequently, ~~I~~ it has become impossible for me to defend myself. I need able legal assistance which I am not in a position to secure, nor able to pay for. ~~But it is the duty of the legal pro~~ You will appreciate the extent of my helplessness from the fact that I have been disallowed to make in the Magistrate Court a statement explaining the charge against me. I ~~to~~ must take the matter up to the High Court; but there is none to argue my case.

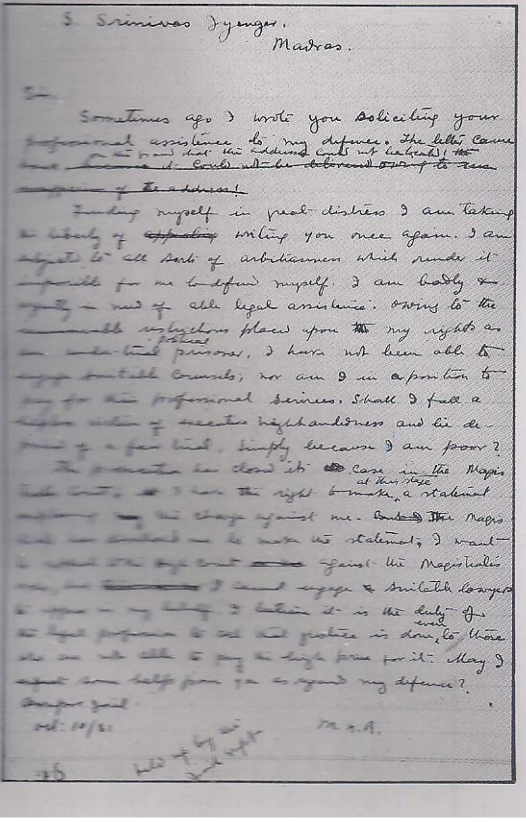
I appeal to bring the matter to the notice of the legal profession of the country, whose duty it is to see that a fair trial is given even to those who are not able to pay the high price for justice.

Cawnpur Jail
Oct: 10/31

M. N. R.

held up by the Jail Supdt.

Roy's letter dated 10 October 1931 to R. S. Ruikar



S. Srinivas Iyengar.
Madras.

Sir,

Sometimes ago I wrote you soliciting your professional assistance to my defence. The letter came back on the ground that the addressee could not be located! ~~the~~ ~~because it could not be delivered owing to [illegible] of the address!~~

Finding myself in great distress I am taking the liberty of ~~appealing~~ writing you once again. I am subjected to all sorts of arbitrariness which render it impossible for me to defend myself. I am badly and urgently in need of able legal assistance. Owing to the unreasonable restrictions placed upon ~~the~~ my rights as an under-trial political prisoner, I have not been able to engage suitable counsels; nor am I in a position to pay for their professional services. Shall I fall a helpless victim of executive highhandedness and be deprived of a fair trial, simply because I am poor?

The prosecution has closed its ~~case~~ case in the Magistrate Court, ~~and~~ I have the right to make at this stage a statement explaining ~~[illegible]~~ the charge against me. ~~But~~ The Magistrate has disallowed me to make the statement; I want to appeal to the High Court ~~[illegible]~~ against the Magistrate's ruling, but ~~[illegible]~~ I cannot engage a suitable lawyer to appear in my behalf. I believe it is the duty of the legal profession to see that justice is done even to those who are not able to pay the high price for it. May I expect some help from you to expand my defence?

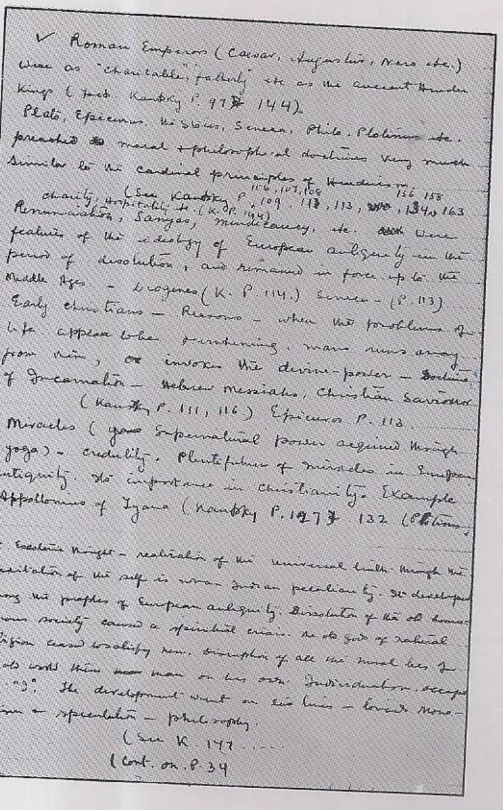
Cawnpur Jail.
Oct: 10/31

M. N. R.

held up by the Jail Supdt.

46

Roy's letter dated 10 October 1931 to S. Srinivas Iyenger



✓ Roman Emperors (Caesar, Augustus, Nero etc.) were as "charitable", fatherly" etc as the ancient Hindu Kings (see Kautsky P. 97 & 144).

Plato, Epicurus, the Stoics, Seneca, Philo, Plotinus etc. preached moral & philosophical doctrines very much similar to the cardinal principles of Hinduism.

(See Kautsky P. 106, 107, 108, 109, 112, 113, 136, 158, 134 & 163

charity, hospitality etc. (K. P. 144)

Renunciation, Sanyas, mendicancy, etc. were features of the ideology of European antiquity in the period of dissolution, and remained in force up to the Middle Ages. – Diogenes (K. P. 114.) Seneca – (P. 113)

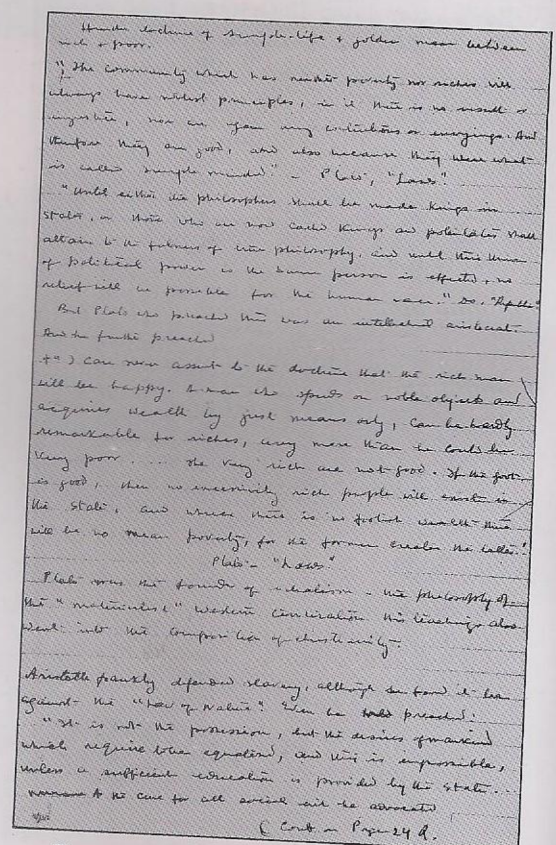
Early christians – Reasons – when the problems of life appear to be overwhelming, man runs away from them, ~~or~~ invokes the divine power – Doctrine of Incarnation – Hebrew Messiahs, Christian Saviour (Kautsky P. 111, 116.) Epicurus P. 113.

Miracles (supernatural power acquired through yoga) – credulity. Plentifulness of miracles in European antiquity. Its importance in Christianity. Example Appollonius of Tyana (Kautsky P. 127 & 132 (Plotinus)

+ Ecstatic insight – realisation of the universal truth through the meditation of the self is not an Indian peculiarity. It developed among the peoples of European antiquity. Dissolution of the old homogeneous society caused a spiritual crisis. The old gods of natural religion ceased to satisfy men. Disruption of all the social ties of the old world threw man on his own. Individualism, occupation with "I". The development went on two lines – toward Monotheism & speculation – philosophy.

(See K. 177 ....

(Cont. on P. 34



Hindu doctrine of simple life & golden mean between rich & poor.

"The community which has neither poverty nor riches will always have noblest principles, in it there is no insult or injustice, nor are there any contentions or envyings. And therefore they are good, and also because they were what is called simple minded." – Plato, "Laws".

"Until either the philosophers shall be made kings in states, or those who are now called kings and potentates shall attain to the fulness of true philosophy, and until this union of political power in the same person is effected, no relief will be possible for the human race." So, "Republic"

But Plato who preached this was an intellectual aristocrat. And he further preached

+ "I can never assent to the doctrine that the rich man will be happy. A man who spends on noble objects and acquires wealth by just means only, can be hardly remarkable for riches, any more than he could be very poor .... the very rich are not good. If the god is good, then no excessively rich people will exist in the State, and where there is no foolish wealth there will be no mean poverty, for the former creates the latter."

Plato – "Laws"

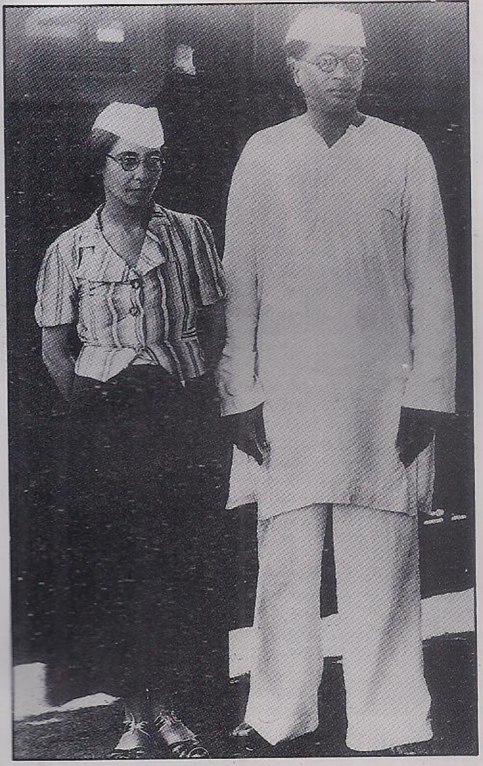
Plato was the founder of idealism – the philosophy of the "materialist" Western civilisation. His teachings also went into the composition of christianity.

Aristotle frankly defended slavery, although he found it against the "Law of Nature". Then he ~~told~~ preached:

"It is not the possessions, but the desires of mankind which require to be equalised, and this is impossible, unless a sufficient education is provided by the State... As the cure for all social ails he advocated

(Cont. on Page 24 a.

Two pages from the Prison Manuscripts

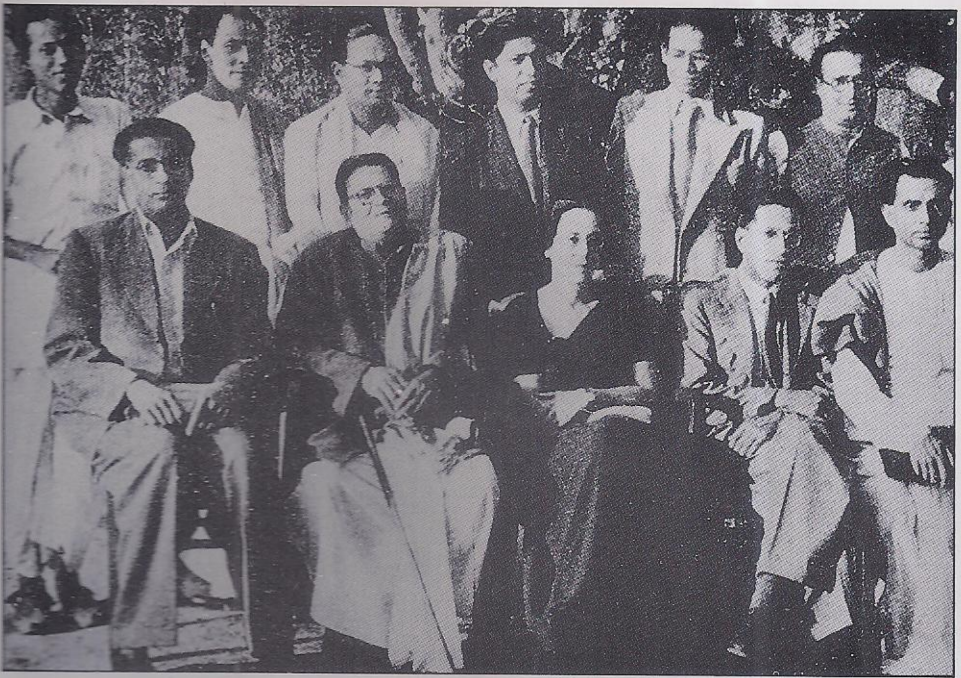


M. N. Roy and Ellen Roy as members of the Indian National Congress, 1937

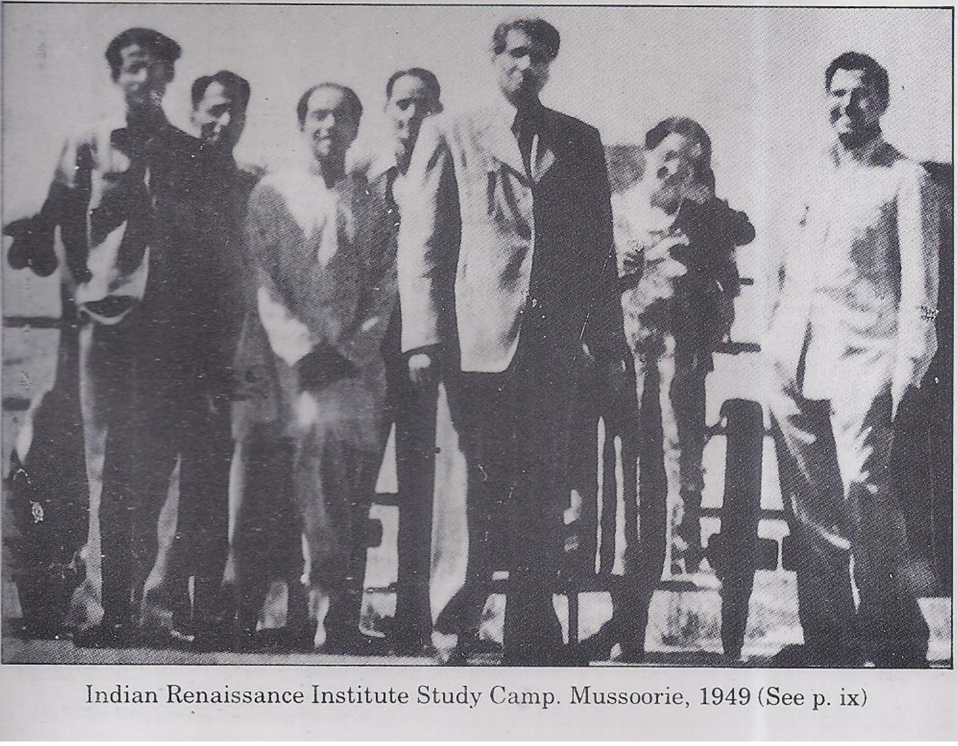
M. N. Roy and Ellen Roy at 13 Mohini Road, Dehra Dun, 1938

M. N. Roy and Ellen Roy at Bishnupur Conference, 1938

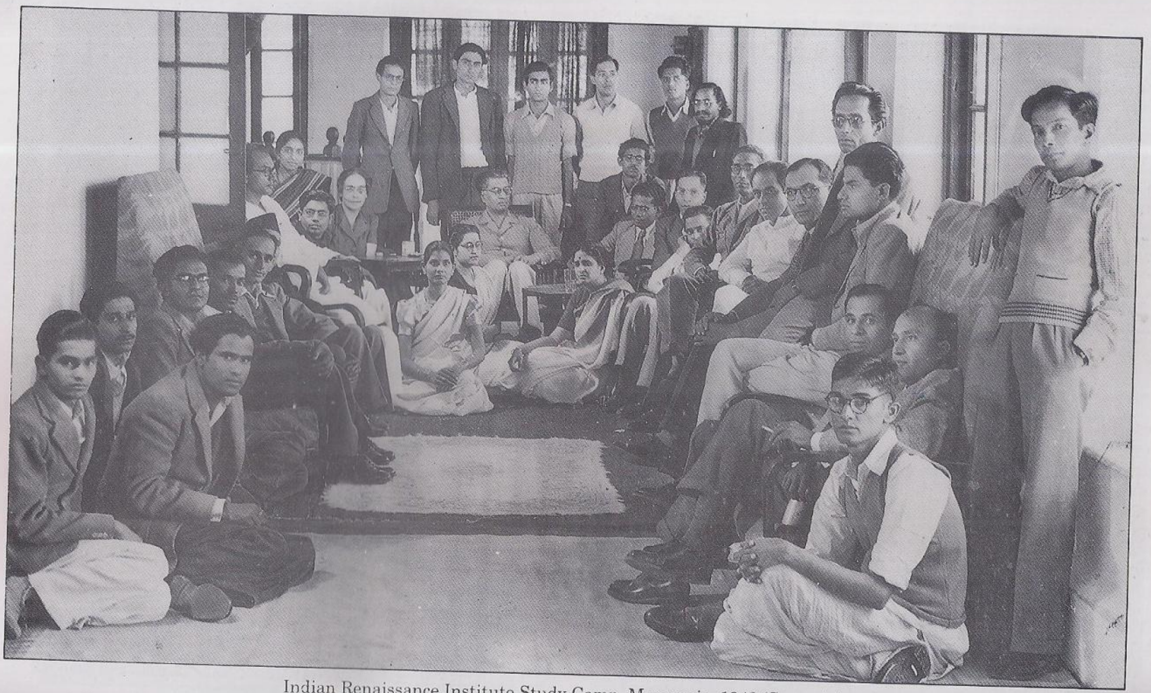
M.N. Roy with his Colleagues in the League of Radical Congressmen 1939–40 (See p. IX)



At the Radical Democratic Party Study Camp at Uttarpara, Hooghly, 1947 (See p. ix)

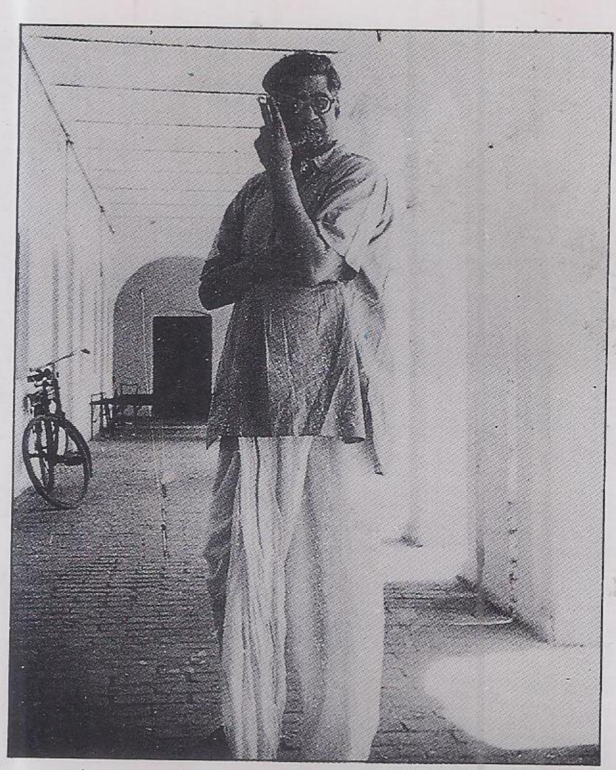


Indian Renaissance Institute Study Camp. Mussoorie, 1949 (See p. ix)



Indian Renaissance Institute Study Camp. Mussoorie, 1949 (See p. ix)

Portrait of M. N. Roy, undated, probably 1938--9



A rare photograph of M. N. Roy wearing Bengali clothes
(undated, probably some time in the late forties)

M. N. Roy with Tarkateerth Laxman Shastri Joshi, 1953

M. N. Roy and Ellen Roy at 13 Mohini Road, Dehra Dun, 1952

M. N. Roy and Ellen Roy at 13 Mohini Road, Dehra Dun, 1953

Photograph of Roy taken after his recovery from the first attack, 1953

Even in the major Upanishads, which have come to be regarded as the foundation of the Vedantist metaphysical system, the discerning student finds unmistakable evidence of materialism. That is only natural; because the speculations of men, whose spiritual thirst is no longer satisfied with the moonshine of natural religion, inevitably tend towards a physical explanation of natural phenomena. Ancient Indian speculation could not be free from this general psychological rule. Fragmentary evidence only proves that records of the early materialistic thought were destroyed in course of time. Until those lost chapters of the spiritual history of India are recovered or rewritten, Indian philosophy will hang in the air. Pending the accomplishment of that outstanding task, for the present purpose it will be sufficient to reproduce some well-known passages from the more important Upanishads:

'What is the origin of the world? Ether (*akasha*), for all these beings take their rise from ether only, and returns into ether. Ether is their rest.'[5]

Again, 'That which is called ether, is the revealer of all forms and names.'[6]

If the conception of *akasha* is devoid of all content, then the argument of the nihilists becomes unanswerable, and everything must be reduced to nothing; as non-existent. Moreover, in the same Upanishad, Brahman is also mentioned as the cause of everything. If *akasha* was a metaphysical conception, identical with Brahman, it would not be necessary for its being specified as the revealer of all forms and names, in addition to Brahman. Obviously, the function of revealing forms and names does not belong to Brahman. If things are supposed to have another cause, over and above the metaphysical Final Cause, then the former must logically be conceived as a material cause. There must have been dispute on this point. Because Sankaracharya found it necessary to insist that 'the word ether must here be taken to denote Brahman'.[7] But it is equally, or perhaps more logical to assume that the obvious meaning of the passage is more sensible and, in that case, the fact that Brahman also was mentioned as the cause of all is to be set to the credit of prevailing prejudice. The assumption of the material cause, named ether, is sufficient for explaining the origin of the world. Yet, the venerable conception of Brahman is retained as a matter of form. The entire history of scientific thought, almost down to our days, suffers from this fallacy.

In the *Katha Upanishad*, the world is visualized as evolving out of a primal material condition.[8] Kapila takes that as his point of departure for the doctrine of the Pradhan and Avyakta (undeveloped or potential).

In *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, *aga* (fire) is assumed as 'the one unborn from which everything springs'.[9] *Aga* is not, however, identified with Brahman. So, it must have been conceived as a cause other than the spiritual First Cause. Here again, the physical world is traced to a material origin. The materialistic tendency in the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* is so very pronounced that even Sankaracharya finds it very difficult to explain it away. It will be shown later on that, in order to combat Buddhism which was the ultimate outcome of all the materialist tendencies in ancient India, Sankaracharya was compelled to take up a very thinly veiled materialistic position.

The Vedanta has come to be accepted as the most representative and authoritative school of ancient Indian philosophy. As its name implies, it claims to contain all the wisdom of the Vedas. But being based on the authority of the Scriptures, it can hardly be accorded the distinction of philosophy. As a matter of fact, Vedanta is a very highly metaphysical system of theology. As such, it goes beyond the limits of a theistic religion, and represents a very highly developed form of pantheism. Pantheism is only inverted materialism. No other logical conclusion can be drawn from any consistent system of monism. The Vedantist metaphysical speculation completely destroys the idea of a god, and consequently liquidates religion. The materialist implication of the Vedantist pantheism becomes evident in its masterly exposition by Sankaracharya. The metaphysical monism of the Vedanta system was constructed by the Brahmin intellectuals in order to combat the materialist schools of philosophy which had logically resulted from the earlier speculation of thinkers no longer satisfied with the fantasies and fairy-tales of the primitive Vedic religion.

The spiritual revolt represented by the Indian materialists eventually culminated in the rise of Buddhism which all but liquidated the Vedic natural religion and freed India from Brahmanical domination for several hundred years. Internal evidence proves that the Vedanta Sutras were composed for combating Buddhism. Therefore, they could not be regarded as the direct outcome of the speculative thought recorded in the Upanishads. The composition of the earlier Upanishads and the Vedanta Sutras must have been separated by several hundred years, during which period the spiritual development of India was in the direction of materialism, represented by Kanada, Kapila, and many others, and of rationalism, represented by the Buddhists and Jains subsequently. The triumph of Buddhism, and its supremacy for so many centuries, prove that the metaphysical school of thought, represented by the Vedantists could not check the tide of materialism and rationalism. It was only after the defeat of the Buddhist revolution that Vedantist metaphysics and pantheism were revived as the ideology of the Brahmanical reaction. The Sutras themselves could not have been compiled earlier than the fourth century BC, by which time Buddhism had become a powerful challenge to the Brahmanical orthodoxy. A considerable portion of them is devoted to a vigorous polemic against the Buddhists. On the other hand, the philosophical origin of Buddhism is clearly to be traced to the Sankhya and Vaisheshika systems. The early

Buddhist as well as Jain philosophers drew their inspiration from Kanada and Kapila.

Although there is reason to believe that those fathers of Hindu philosophy lived more or less at the same time, a comparative study of the two systems allows the inference that Vaisheshik was the oldest system of Hindu Philosophy. Its founder lived about the same time as the founder of ancient Greek materialism, namely, approximately, in the sixth century BC. He also expounded an atomist theory for explaining the origin of the world. The following are the main points of Kanada's atomism.

All substance is composed of parts which are governed by their qualities of inherence and conjunction. That thing at which the distinction of whole and the parts stops, and which therefore marks the limit of division into minuter parts, is the atom. The atoms are the cause of the world; an effect may not be assumed without cause.[10] The atoms are eternal and belong to four classes which possess corresponding qualities. The atoms of the same class and of similar quality combine to produce the several gross elements. The combination takes place by two causes: the material cause, inherent in the atoms themselves, and the non-inherent cause which is assumed to be the supernatural will.

All substances consisting of parts originate from the substances connected with them by the relation of inherence. The substance is composed of parts inherent in it. The relation of conjunction operates in the process. Inherent parts of a substance come together, thanks to the relation of conjunction, to produce the substance. Whatever consists of parts, originates from those substances with which it is connected by the relation of inherence, conjunction cooperating. The whole world is composed of parts; because it is composed of parts, it has beginning and end; an effect may not be assumed without a cause; therefore, the atoms are the cause of the world. The atoms are of a spherical shape. When the atoms are isolated and motionless, no effect is produced. After that, the unseen principle, acting as the operative cause, and conjunction cooperating, they produce the entire aggregate of things, beginning with binary atoms. The material cause of the atomic compound is the constituent atoms; the conjunction is caused by the unseen operative cause.

The materialism of the system is evident. The only weak spot in an otherwise self-contained system of purely physical explanation of the origin of the world, is the assumption of the unseen, non-inherent, cause in addition to the material cause. Obviously, the assumption is superfluous. Since the tendency to combine is inherent in atoms themselves, there is absolutely no need for an unseen (*adrishta*) cause to make them coalesce. The Vaisheshika system does not need an impulse from outside for the atoms to begin aggregating. The tendency to combine is inherent in the atoms. 'Bigness is produced from plurality inherent in the causes.'[11] That is to say, to combine is in the nature of the atoms. Kanada himself did not go so far as to visualize his atoms in a perpetual motion. The postulation of a motionless state of isolated atoms required the additional postulate of the action of the 'unseen principle'.[12] The commentator Upaskar removed the defect. According to him, extension, that is, perceptible matter, is caused by the principle of '*dvitva*' inherent in the primal matter; it is a natural propensity of two atoms to unite. Indeed, the commentator makes clear an idea to be found in the sutras themselves.

However, in assuming the superfluous non-inherent cause, Kanada did not contradict himself any more crassly than did, much later, the fathers of modern science like Copernicus, Galileo, Descartes, Newton, and others who paid homage to the prejudice about God, even when they deprived him of all functions. Today it is not possible to say whether Kanada himself believed or not in the necessity of the obviously superfluous assumption of the non-inherent cause. Even if he did, that would not affect the real implication of his hypothesis, which was purely materialistic.

Kanada's system makes no room for the soul in the metaphysical or spiritualist sense of the term. According to it, intelligence is not an inherent property of the soul; it is conceived as a mere adventitious quality of the atoms, arising only when the soul is joined with an internal organ. Kanada argues: The qualities which inhere in the substance, constituting the cause, originate qualities of the same kind in the substance constituting the effects.[13] Hence, if the intelligent Brahman is assumed as the cause of the world, we should expect to find intelligence inherent in the effect also, in the world. This is not the case. Therefore Brahman cannot be the cause of the world. Consciousness is thus regarded as the product of a complicated combination of atoms. Soul is merely the disposition of organism, which is a combination of matter. At a certain stage of combination, an atomic aggregate acquires the property of receiving impressions of external objects and reacting to them. Consciousness develops at that stage. The constituents of the 'Soul' of the Vaisheshika system are inherent in the substance which constitutes the organism. And that substance is composed of atoms, which again are only of four kinds—of water, earth, air, and fire.

Moreover, while disputing the immateriality of spirituality of the soul, Kanada himself throws overboard the superfluous assumption of the non-inherent cause. He categorically declares that the Brahman cannot be the cause of the world. And in another place, he declares equally categorically that the atoms are the cause of the world. The early Indian metaphysicians regarded Brahman as an intelligent being or intelligent principle. The materialists combated that conception. They could do so because they did not require the postulate of an external intelligence or force to give the first impulse for the origin of the world. Therefore, their materialist speculation was self-contained, the formal inclusion of the conception of Brahman or non-inherent cause was only a matter of prejudice or conformity with venerable traditions.

The Vaisheshika system was condemned by the orthodox as 'semi-destructive' or 'semi-nihilistic'[14] because of its dynamic view of nature. It regarded nature not as a being but a process of becoming. It held that the continuous change in the size of bodies involved continuous perishing of the old and continuous rise of new substance. Even the idea of the indestructibility of matter is anticipated.

As a matter of fact, Kanada's atomism was even more self-contained than that of Democritus. By visualizing the atoms as possessing the inherent property of coalescing and combining, it was free from the fallacy which opened the Democritean system to Aristotle's attack. Kanada's system was to a large extent free from the problem of action at a distance. In his time, it was the dominating current of thought. The Vaisheshika atomism was the common point of departure of a whole series of speculative thinkers, whose contributions to the spiritual heritage of India approximated real philosophy, and tried to free Indian society from the domination of the Vedic priestcraft. Nevertheless, the unnecessary assumption of metaphysical cause was due to the priestly prejudices from which the main currents of materialist and rationalist thought in ancient India could not liberate themselves. The social conditions that caused in Greece the evolution of thought from natural religion to the materialist philosophy, did not ripen in India. Intellectual life remained a priestly monopoly. The result was the weakness of the scientific and rationalist thought which, therefore, was eventually overwhelmed, and even its records were practically all destroyed by the triumphant Brahmanical reaction.

Although the fundamental principles of ancient Indian materialism were stated originally in the Vaisheshika system, the dominating position in the intellectual life of that period came to be occupied by the Sankhya system of Kapila. The latter deviated largely from the strictly materialistic ground, and developed rather as a rational–naturalist system of metaphysics. Nevertheless, the physical principles of materialism were elaborated philosophically by Kapila. He is known as an atheist who maintained that the existence of God could not be proved by logical evidence.[15] But the real merit of his philosophy is the recognition of the objective reality of the physical world. The Sankhya system decidedly rejects the doctrine that the external world has no objective existence, and that nothing exists but thought. Arguing against some earlier philosophers, who are characterized by the commentators as 'heretic' or 'nihilists', Kapila lays down: 'Not thought alone exists; because there is the intuition of the external world.' 'Then, since, if the one does not exist, the other does not exist, there is a void.'[16]

The most authoritative commentator, Vijnana Bhikshu, interprets the Sutras as follows:

> The reality is not thought alone; because external objects also are proved to exist, just as thought is, by intuition. If external things do not exists, then, a mere void offers itself. Because, if the external world does not exist, then, thought does not exist; for, it is intuition that proves the objective; and if the intuition of the external did not establish the objective, then the intuition of thought also would not establish the existence of thought.

The analogy with the point of departure of Descartes' rationalism—'*Cogito, ergo sum*'—is obvious. But there is more then pure rationalism. The theory of cognition is definitely materialistic. The underlying principle of the Sankhya theory of knowledge is identical with the modern materialist principle that consciousness is determined by being. The defenders of the religious doctrine of creation tried to silence the equity about the origin of things by denying the reality of the world itself. They argued that a thing of dream—an unreality—did not need a substantial origin. Kapila retorted: 'The world is not unreal; because there is no fact contradictory [to its reality], and because it is not the [false] result of depraved senses [leading to a belief in what ought not to be believed].' This is clear enough. But Kapila goes farther—to the extent of stating the fundamental principle of the rationalist–materialist view of the world. 'A thing is not made out of nothing.'[17]

The bottom is knocked off the doctrine of creation. The origin of the physical world is traced to an endless process of causality, and that process is inherent in nature. Existing eternally by itself, the world does not need a creator or creation. Nor is there any beginning. Because, in that case also, something would come out of nothing. Thus, the Sankhya system rejects even 'immanent teleology', a doctrine made fashionable by some philosophers of our time.

The materialist essence of the Sankhya system is confused by its apparent rejection of atomism. But the very argument advanced for the purpose implies a more perfected form of materialism: 'What is limited, cannot be the substance of all.'[18] Together with the Vaisheshika, the Sankhya also reduces the 'gross elements' to atoms; but Kapila traces the severally existing atoms down to a still simpler all-pervading substance. This is very much the same as done by Aristotle; but there is no evidence whether he resorted to this expediency to avoid the baffling problem of action at a distance. However, by seeking the ultimate substance beyond the atoms, Kapila anticipated the most modern conception of substance instead of rejecting materialism.

Kapila visualized existence as a hierarchy, so to say, composed of twenty-five realities. In addition to the soul, nature, mind, and self-consciousness, there are 'subtle' elements, sense organs and 'gross elements'. The pyramid stands on the apex. Reverse the order, and you have a process of evolution. But Kapila conceived the process in the Hegelian fashion: as 'Idea expressing itself'. Although the process of evolution is set on its head, the 'realities', however, are derived inductively from the immediately perceptible gross elements. The existence of the 'subtle elements' (sound, colour, touch, taste, and smell) is inferred from the 'gross elements' which are directly perceptible. The logic is obvious: Everything that is gross, is formed of something which is less gross. The process is traced to the primal state of nature in which everything lies in a state of inaction. But Nature is not only eternal, but self-operative, 'Since the root has no root, the root is rootless.'[19] Thus, Nature is the Final Cause. Since mind and self-consciousness are placed within the scheme of nature, they are included in the materialistic system. Only the soul stands outside, but like Newton's *deus ex machina*, it is completely unnecessary for explaining the being and becoming of the world. The existence of nature is inferred from its perceptible phenomena. These are real; they must therefore have a real cause. That is to say, the constituents of the world exist eternally. Those ultimate elements are called, in the Vaisheshika and Nyaya systems; atoms. Kapila reduces them to an all-pervasive existence, and calls it the Nature in a state of inaction.

The Nature of the Sankhya in its primal state is like Spinoza's '*beseelte Materie*' (animated substance). Three qualities (goodness, passion and darkness), inherent in nature, are the lever of all natural operations. Atomism is rejected, because pain and pleasure are not properties of the atom. Everything in existence is an aggregate of pain, pleasure, delusion, etc., which are clearly perceptible. But here arises a very pertinent question: What is the cause of these categories or qualities? Kapila himself asserts that something cannot come out of nothing. Obviously to avoid this dilemma, he makes his nature an all-pervading primal substance, having the three qualities in a state of equilibrium. The atomists would contend that the atom could just as well represent the equilibrium of qualities. However, Kapil's rejection of atomism leads him to a position where the materialness of Nature appears to disappear. The primal existence appears like the Brahman of the Vedantist, or the Hegelian Non-Being—Absolute Nothing. But that is far from what Kapila desires to establish. Therefore, he concludes his arguments against atomism by reaffirming the materialness of Nature.

> 'Nothing can be produced from a non-entity like man's horn.' 'There must be some material of which the product may consist.'[20]

The Sankhya system, with its rigid rationalism, cannot do without a material substratum of the world. Because, if that is dispensed with, everything may happen everywhere, which is an absurdity according to itself. Consequently, the Sankhya conception of primal nature cannot be essentially different from the conception of 'matter in motion'. Its rejection of atomism, therefore, could not be a repudiation of materialism; it was done with the motive of making the physical explanation of the world free from all possible logical fallacies. An all-pervasive primal substance obviates the difficulty of original combination, and consequently, for securing the first impulse. The postulate of a metaphysical agency is not necessary.

Indeed, a mechanistic conception of nature is not only logically inherent in the Sankhya system, but becomes explicit in the definition of the properties of the '*pradhan*'. Kapila holds that just as mother's milk and water flow mechanically, just so 'the *pradhan* also, although non-intelligent, may be supposed to move from its own nature'.[21] Motion, as distinct from conscious movement or intelligence, is thus clearly visualized as inherent in the *pradhan*, which is the name for the all-pervading material substratum of the world. This again shows that the metaphysical elements in the Sankhya system are altogether superfluous, the system being self-contained as a mechanistic–materialist conception of the world.

As regards the soul, it is explicitly ruled out as the Final Cause of things; and the obvious logical deduction that the origin of things is material, is clearly drawn from the superfluity of the conception of soul:

> While both [Nature and Soul] are antecedent [to all products], since the one [Soul] is devoid [of this character of being a cause], it is applicable only to the other of the two [Nature].[22]

Having divested soul of all qualities, and ascribed to nature all active properties and the status of the Final Cause, Kapila finds it very difficult to prove how the non-discrimination between the two originates. The difficulty lies in the fact that his conception of the Nature as a self-operative entity renders soul only an empty conception—a concession to traditional prejudice. He extricates himself from the position by going still another step farther away from metaphysical dualism towards materialistic monism. Understanding, mind, reason, and even ego, are all discriminated from the Soul as products of Nature. Thus, the Soul is left without any function. Indeed, by its very nature (absolute, immutable, etc.), it cannot have any connection with anything. Thus, there is an unbridgeable gulf between the two ultimate categories of existence. The gulf could be bridged only by abandoning the dualist position. It is difficult to ascertain if Kapila himself did that. The Sutras are not very clear on the point. One of the commentators cuts the Gordian knot.

> These two [Nature and Soul] are alike without antecedent, like seed and sprout of which it is needless to ask which is the first; the old puzzle, which was the first, the acorn or the oak? being a frivolous question.

The relation between Nature and Soul (*prakriti* and *purusha*) thus interpreted, the Sankhya system becomes free of the dualist fallacy, and stands out as a self-contained materialist system. Either simultaneous existence of the two uncreated beings is admitted, or Soul ceases to exist except as an attribute of Nature. Then, the logic of 'seed and sprout' is faulty. The removal of this logical defect leads to monism. Of the Soul and Nature, one must be the cause of the other. By its very nature, the Soul of Sankhya cannot be the cause of creation; because, in that case, it would cease to be what it is and could never be emancipated. So, there remains Nature as the only real source of existence, and Kapila conceives Nature as a purely material entity, self-originating and functioning mechanically. Even the so-called vital forces are the products of the mechanistic operation of the material entity, Nature.

The most important contribution made to the development of philosophical thought by the Sankhya system, however, is its sensationist theory of knowledge. Kapila was an out and out empiricist. He holds, with an admirable logical rigour, that sense perception is the only reliable source of knowledge.

> Determination [right apprehension] of something not previously known is right notion [knowledge]. What is in the highest degree productive thereof, is evidence.[23]

Evidence is defined as perception, inference, and testimony (scriptural). By admitting inference in the category of evidence, Kapila anticipated the rise of inductive logic. His contribution to the scientific mode of thought, therefore, is very considerable. The above Sutra is interpreted by one of the commentators as follows:

> The proof or evidence, or whatever we may choose to call that from which right notion results, is just the conjunction of an organ [with the appropriate object].[24]

The Sutras themselves are very categorical about the role of perception in the process of acquiring knowledge. A decisive answer to the questions raised even by modern epistemological nihilists was given by Kapila:

> Perception is that discernment which, being in conjunction [with the things perceived], portrays the forms thereof.[25]

It is held that the organs (external, that is, of perception, and internal, that is, of inference) are products of Nature. They are not 'depraved'; that is, they do not portray as real what is not real. Therefore, whatever is established on their evidence, is real. Since the organs bear testimony to the existence of the external world, its reality is established.

While the Sankhyas thus expounded an atheistic naturalism, the Vaisheshika and Nyaya systems tended clearly towards materialism. That very significant evolution of thought out of the background of the Vedic religion and the metaphysical speculations of the Upanishads, in the fullness of time ushered in the Golden Age of India, that, is, the Buddhist period. The latter Upanishads and early Buddhist literature are full of references to 'heretics, atheists, and materialists'.

When Buddha was a young man, the great halls and vast forests of northern India were echoing with disputations denying the divine origin of the Vedas and the authority of the Brahmans, and preaching agnosticism, atheism, and materialism. And it was during the several centuries of the Buddhist era that India really attained a very high level of material and moral culture.

The long process of the development of naturalist, rationalist, sceptic, agnostic, and materialist thought in ancient India found culmination in the Charvaka system of philosophy, which can be compared with Greek Epicureanism, and as such is to be appreciated as the positive outcome of the intellectual culture of ancient India. The greatest of the *paribrajak*s mentioned in the earliest Buddhist literature, those Sophists and Stoics of ancient India, was one Brihaspati.* He was the founder of Indian Epicureanism—the Charvaka system. The Brihaspati Sutras are referred to frequently in contemporary Buddhist and Brahmanical texts. But only some remnants of the Sutras themselves survived the downfall of Buddhism. From them we learn that Brihaspati condemned Brahmans as 'men devoid of intellect and manliness, who uphold the authority of the Vedas because they yield them the means of a comfortable livelihood.'

The Charvakas laughed at the notion that the Vedas were divinely revealed truth; they held that truth can never be known except through the senses. Therefore, the idea of soul is a delusion. The Charvakas thus anticipated the modern philosophical thought of ultra-empiricism. They held that even reason was not to be trusted, because every inference depended for its validity not only on accurate observation and correct reasoning, but also upon the assumption that the future would behave like the past, and of this there was no certainty. That was anticipating modern agnosticism more than two thousand years before Hume. But

---

*The name Brihaspati occurs in the ancient Indian literature frequently in various connections over a period of many hundred years during which naturalist, rationalist, and materialist thought developed and wielded a considerable influence. Brihaspati is mentioned as the founder of *Swabhavabad of Lokayata* and also of the Charvaka System. While it is quite possible that Brihaspati was a legendary figure, it also proves a continuity of naturalist thought. MNR.

the Charvakas were not mere nihilists, agnostics, and sceptics. They developed an elaborate system of positive philosophical thought.

> All phenomena are natural. Neither in experience nor in history do we find any interposition of supernatural forces. Matter is the only reality; the mind is matter thinking. The hypothesis of a creator is useless for explaining or understanding the world. Men think religion necessary only because, being accustomed to it, they feel a sense of loss and an uncomfortable void when the growth of knowledge destroys faith. Morality is natural; it is a social convention and convenience, not a divine command. There is no need to control instincts and emotions; they are commands of nature. The purpose of life is to live; and the only wisdom is happiness.

As the composite outcome of all the positive elements in the whole previous history of Indian thought, Buddhism shook the very foundation of the hoary edifice of Brahmanical orthodoxy. It disputed the authority of the Scriptures; vigorously condemned the sacrificial rites and rituals of the Vedic Natural Religion; it denied the existence even of an impersonal First Cause (the Brahman of the Upanishads); and it discarded the doctrine of Soul. For the first time, there began to develop in India a system of truly philosophical thought, having for its point of departure the atomism of the Nyaya–Vaisheshika system and the rationalist–mechanistic conception of Nature contained in the Sankhya system.

Moreover, the Buddhist philosophers, particularly of the 'realist' (*Sarvastitvadins*) and the 'nihilist' (*Sunyavadins*) schools, took over the sceptical views of the earliest ideological rebels who preceded the formulation of the materialist system of the Vaisheshikas and Sankhyas. But the so-called 'nihilism' of the Buddhists is to be traced back directly to the dialectic view of nature: that the continuous change in bodies, owing to atomic combination and separation, necessarily involves a continuous process of the old perishing and the new growing. This dynamic view of nature was formulated in the Vaisheshika system, and subsequently elaborated by Kapila, who, notwithstanding his unnecessary metaphysical deviation, was essentially a materialist.

The Buddhist 'nihilists', however, did not reduce everything to non-existence, as had been done by the older nihilists. The Buddhists visualized everything in an endless process of constant flux. They challenged the notion of an eternal, changeless, absolute existence. The logical consequence of their dynamic view was the rejection of the dogma of the Absolute Truth revealed in the Vedas. All the three schools of the Buddhist philosophy (including the Idealists—*vijnanvadins*) taught that every existence is momentary—in a state of eternal flux.[26] Their doctrine controverted the basic assumption of the orthodox Hindu philosophy of the Vedanta system.

On the basis of the materialistic and quasi-materialistic Vaisheshika and Sankhya system, Buddha reversed the relation between the spiritual and material beings. As a consequence of the reversal of the order of sequence, their relative values were also revaluated. Buddha held that soul is a by-product of the very being of man, governed by the laws of nature. Thus differentiated from, and contrasted with, 'the spiritual', being could only mean physical being. The Buddhist conception of individual consciousness does not carry with it any assertion or implication that 'the Ego' exists or is, in any way, a reality.[27] What really exists, according to Buddhism, is *sanskaras*—activities and impressions man receives in [the] course of these activities. The *sanskaras*, again, work out in a causal series. The soul does not inspire the activities of man's life; on the contrary, it is the sum total of impressions accumulated by organic activities.[28]

The materialist essence of Buddhist philosophy, although couched in an ethico–idealistic terminology, stands out in a clear relief under the fierce attack of its Brahmanical opponents. Sankaracharya, for example, exclaimed in exasperation: 'Thus, blind karma is permanent, having the power to produce an infinite number of conscious individuals—souls.' A correct evaluation of consciousness, which implied devaluation of the soul, the denial of its spiritual nature and precedence over physical being, led Buddha to do away with the belief in God, who can be conceived *philosophically* only as the 'Universal Soul'.[29] For the solution of the question of life, Buddha found that belief in God was useless. Since the existence of God, as the spiritual cause of the Universe, can be established only upon the assumption of the extra-materiality of human consciousness, the rejection of the doctrine of soul necessarily leads to the denial of God. God cannot be reached except through the doctrine of soul.

The Realist school of Buddhism defines the existence of a thing as its causal efficiency. According to this essentially materialistic doctrine, the existence of an abstract principle cannot be proved. The Nihilist school is deduced from the Realist. It holds that, since everything is being constantly destroyed, a void—non-existence—is the cause of everything. According to Sankaracharya, they preached the following doctrine: 'Nothing can become a cause as long as it remains unchanged, but has to that end to undergo destruction, and thus existence springs from non-existence only.' The Buddhist Sutra itself is: 'On account of the manifestation [of effects] not without previous destruction [of the cause].'[30] The seed must decompose, become non-existent *as seed*, before the plant can grow. The world is thus visualized as a self-originating, dynamic process. There is no difference between the Realists and the Nihilists, if their common materialist essence is divested of scholastic sophistry.

Buddhist materialism was based on Vaisheshika atomism. It can be summarized as follows: There are two aggregates of existence—external (material) and internal (mental). But mind presupposes the existence of an atomic combination. The external, composed of the 'elements' (*bhuta*) and the internal, composed of the elementals (*bhautika*), embrace the outside nature as well as the gross bodily organs. The former is made of elements which are earth, water, fire, and air. These, in their turn, are formed respectively of the different kinds of atoms; whereas the latter are made of the 'elementals', that is, diverse combination of the elements.[31]

Since mind and things mental are conditional upon the existence of an atomic aggregate, the 'internal' is evidently not an independent being; it grows out of the 'external'. In other words, the mental is derived from the material. This is further evidenced from the division of the 'internal' into five groups (*skandhas*). They are sensation, knowledge, feeling, verbal knowledge, and impression. These are all diverse functions of the bodily organism—an aggregate of atoms. No school of Buddhist philosophy admits the existence of any extra-natural or metaphysical intelligence, such as God or Soul, which might bring about the first aggregation of atoms. Therefore, atomic combination must be visualized as a mechanical process out of which the so-called 'internal', that is, the intelligent part of existence, arises.

But the Buddhist philosophy stopped short of this logical conclusion from its own premises. The reason of that shortcoming was the idea of '*nirvana*', which was the characteristic feature of a psychological condition created in an atmosphere of social dissolution. The world is full of sorrows and miseries. One must run away from it. The cardinal principle of Buddhism, namely, '*nirvana*', contradicted the entire system of Buddhist philosophy. Sankaracharya pointed out that contradiction. 'Nor can the atoms and *skandhas* be assumed to enter on activity on their own account, for that would imply their never ceasing to be active.' The ideal of '*nirvana*', is the cessation of all activity. According to the Buddhist mechanistic view of nature, atoms and their aggregates are auto-active. Therefore, as Sankaracharya pointed out, their activity can never cease The material world is eternal.

The ideal of '*nirvana*', represented the nihilism of Buddhist philosophy. It was the quintessence of the ideology of social dissolution. The positive materialist character of Buddhism made it victorious, for a time. But eventually, it was bound to be overwhelmed by its own contradictions. Buddhism was the product of the social conditions of the epoch. It was the ideology of those who could not deny the effects (pains, etc.) of the material existence. For the multitude, the conditions of social dissolution only meant pains. So, that was the effect of their material existence. On the other hand, the initial triumph of Buddhism was due to the fact that it secured the adhesion of a rising class which rejected the

Brahmanic dogma of other-worldliness. According to Sankaracharya, Buddha himself was an idealist. Nevertheless, he propounded a realistic philosophy, 'conforming' himself to the mental state of some of his disciples. It is recorded that hundreds of merchants were associated with Gautama.

The idealistic deviation of the Buddhist philosophy was caused by its having enlisted the patronage of the upper classes. In order to refute the Brahmanical dogma of the Eternal Truth, the rebels expounded the doctrine of the momentariness of everything. In course of time, the doctrine of temporariness was applied not only to the physical, but also to the mental phenomena. The adverse effects of the social existence, pain, sorrow, etc. were also declared to be momentary. One step farther, and Buddhist philosophy shifted its moorings from materialism to idealism. What is momentary, is not real; therefore, pain, etc. are but ideas which have no objective causes. They are only mental states. There does not exist anything but ideas. But the other cardinal principle of the Buddhist philosophy could not be altogether discarded. The phenomenal word is without a beginning; but ideas also have always existed in a chain of mutual causality. They do not need any external object. They are self-existing.

The idealist deviation rendered Buddhism susceptible to Brahmanical influence. The Mahayana School become a replica of Hindu ritualism. Nevertheless, Buddhist idealism retained its philosophical character as against the theological nature of the Brahmanical metaphysics. It never denied the existence of the world; it vaguely came near to the modern philosophical conception of the identity of the object and subject.

The preoccupation with the idea of '*nirvana*' involved Buddhist philosophy into a maze of metaphysical speculations. In that realm of pure fantasies, the Brahmin scholastics not only held their own, but before long turned the table. Sankaracharya had no difficulty in proving that the entire system of the materialist–rationalist Buddhist philosophy was incompatible with the doctrine of '*nirvana*'. The priestly monopoly of ideology was reasserted after it had been shaken by the Buddhist Revolution.

> The dynamic view of nature attained a high degree of clarity with the Jains. The dialectic logic developed by the Jain philosophers was later on condemned by Sankaracharya as 'an unsettling style of reasoning'. It was, indeed, unsettling for the rigid orthodox logic which set up an imaginary absolute standard. Once the absoluteness of the standard of truth is disputed, the whole airy structure of doctrines and dogmas, reared upon that foundation, necessarily collapses.

The Jain philosophers maintained that contradictory attributes, such as being and non-being, could belong to one and the same thing. They subjected the conceptions of absoluteness, unity, and eternity to their 'unsettling style of reasoning'. The result was rejection of the doctrine of the Brahman. The disruptive effect of their views and methods of reasoning can be judged from the charge Shankaracharya brought against them: 'If you maintain that the heavenly world and final release exist or do not exist, and are eternal or non-eternal, the absence of all determinate knowledge, which is implied in such statements, will result in nobody's acting for the purpose of gaining the heavenly world and final release.'

The Jains also believed in Soul; but they conceived it as a constantly changing entity—something very different from the orthodox 'simple and immortal' divine spark in man. They thought that soul was composed of an infinite number of particles—'soul-atoms'—which was constantly increasing and decreasing. That, in their opinion, did not affect the permanence of the soul; for, a thing can be permanent and non-permanent at the same time. For example, although the water is constantly flowing, the stream of water is always there. The ontological counterpart of this logic is obvious: The phenomenal world is permanent and real with all its continual changes and transitoriness.

In the antique period, as well as in the middle-ages, Indian society never quite reached a level of evolution where the power and position of the priesthood could be successfully disputed by a new social class which, by its very nature, would be the standard-bearer of scientific thought and thus lay down the foundation of philosophy.

The distinctive feature of Indian speculation, common to all schools, including even those materialist and quasi-materialist ones, some records of which have come down in history, is the anxiety to find release from the bondage of the life in this world. This morbid conception of life originated in the chaotic and depressing conditions resulting from the disintegration of the antique social order. The picture of social conditions towards the close of the Epic Era, as depicted in the Mahabharata, is anything but bright. Such conditions were sure to beget pessimism as well as revolt. Legends, recorded in the Mahbharata, testify to the rise of the forces of revolt, which sometimes were too powerful for the weakened Kshatriya ruling class. But that was an elemental movement, rather actuated by despair than inspired by the ideal of a new social order.

Pessimism was the prevailing spirit. All the schools of Indian speculation bear the stamp. All look upon nature as a source of bondage; the freedom was not to be had by bursting the bondage, that is, by conquering nature, but by the easier, imaginery way of running away from the 'evil'. The idea of conquering the external nature never entered Indian speculation. Therefore, it could not ever attain the level of real philosophy. Self-mortification is not the conquest of nature. It is to block all the ways of knowing external causes. It means plunging into the dark ocean of blissful ignorance.

Self-mortification, however, had no place in the primitive Vedic religion which, like all natural religions, was 'materialistic' in the vulgar sense of the term. Pessimism, begotten in the chaotic and miserable conditions of the disintegration of the tribal society, was seized upon by the priestly ruling class as the opportunity for expounding the pernicious doctrine of renunciation and self-mortification which became such an effective weapon in the struggle for maintaining their dominating position. Life is full of miseries, because the desires of man can never be satisfied. Control the desires, you will be free from the evils of nature, and all misery will cease. Eternal bliss will be yours. The triumph of the 'spiritualist' view of life reflected a tremendous social reaction which, in its turn, deeply affected speculative thought for a long time to come. Even revolutionary Buddhism could not fully live down that corrupting tradition of a previous social reaction, and was eventually vitiated by the poison. The triumph of the doctrine of self-mortification as the way out of the miseries of life represented the defeat of the forces of dissatisfaction with, and revolt against, the established order of things.

The discontent with things as they are is the condition for their change. The replacement of discontent by resignation, of revolt by indifference, means stagnation of social energy. All striving for material progress ceases, and ideological evolution is correspondingly affected. The triumph of the reactionary priesthood in the class struggle of remote antiquity determined the peculiar feature of Indian speculative thought. The triumph of reaction, in its turn, was possible because there had not yet arisen a class which could lead Indian society out of the crisis resulting from the downfall of the tribal social order. In course of time, the relation of classes changed. More or less disruptive schools of speculation flourished. But they all bore, in a greater or lesser degree, the distinctive stamp which signified a very slow process of social evolution, and the consequent continuation of sacerdotal supremacy.

The urges of life compel man to take up the endless struggle with nature. In course of this struggle, man penetrates deeper and deeper into the mysteries of the Universe, and progressively these mysteries cease to be mysterious. Primitive empiricism gives birth to philosophy; philosophy is the mother of science, and finally science enthrones the venerable mother as the 'science of sciences'. The taboo on the joy of life, the perverse prejudice against the natural urges of life, emasculates man. It holds him back from the mission, given to him by his very being. Consequently, it precludes a free spiritual evolution. Man creates science and philosophy; when the conditions of his social existence set limits to his human existence, his thoughts are naturally distorted. Indian speculation presents such a picture of distorted thought.

Therefore, the rationalist, materialist, and naturalist teaching of Kanad, Kapila, Brihaspati, Gautama, Mahavir, and others were ultimately buried under the ruins of the Buddhist revolution. Brahmanical reaction, reasserting itself in the scholasticism of Sankaracharya, checked all spiritual progress so successfully that a renaissance of the ancient liberating thought was delayed until it was too late. The Hindu ruling classes were so exhausted by the delirium of having overwhelmed a mighty revolution, that the country became an easy prey to foreign invaders. General prostration and stagnation, on the other hand, precluded the rise of new social forces corresponding to those which rescued Europe from the darkness of the pious and spiritual middle-ages.

Whatever record exists about the various schools of philosophical thought in ancient India, bears testimony to the fact that dissatisfaction with the Vedic Natural Religion gave rise to speculations about the origin of the world, which inevitably developed tendencies to explain the world in physical terms. In India also, physics preceded metaphysics. Much of the really philosophical thought of ancient India has unfortunately been lost. But from the fragmentary evidence recorded, that forgotten chapter of the spiritual history of India can be reconstructed. As everywhere, originally, in India also philosophy was materialistic. The materialistic outcome of the speculations of the rebels against the Vedic natural religion, contained in the three systems of philosophy proper, namely, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, and Nyaya, provided the inspiration for the greatest event in the history of ancient India—the Buddhist Revolution. The spiritual development of India during nearly a thousand years, beginning from the seventh century BC, was very largely dominated by materialist and rationalist tendencies. It is highly doubtful whether the Vedanta system was formulated before the end of that Golden Age of Indian history. Internal evidence clearly proves the opposite case. The main purpose with which Vedantist pantheism was developed was to combat the materialist systems of Kanada and Kapila, as well as the revolutionary doctrines of Buddhism and the unsettling logic of the Jains. That being the case, it is permissible to maintain that in ancient India, until the fall of Buddhism, philosophy was largely materialistic. Even as late as the fourth century AD, in the period of triumphant Hindu restoration under the Gupta dynasty, the Chinese traveller Fa Hien found in India no less than 'ninety-six heretical sects, all of whom admitted the reality of worldly phenomena'.

Sankaracharya constructed his rigidly logical, but philosophically ambiguous system of monism for combating Buddhist idealism. But the real enemy he had to contend with was the materialist tradition of the pre-Buddhist philosophy. His works are full of long polemics against materialist and naturalist doctrines; so much so that the fragments, profusely quoted by him, can serve as a reliable foundation for reconstructing the latter. . . .

What has come down to us as the most authoritative and representative

Hindu philosophy, was the creation of Sankaracharya. He was the ideologist of the Brahmanical reaction and patriarchal sacerdotal society which were re-established on the ruins of the Buddhist revolution. But all Sankarcharya's efforts for liquidating the traditions of the really philosophical thoughts of ancient India were a failure. This very important fact of the spiritual history of India is not realized. Yet, it is obvious from a critical study of Sankaracharya's work. He failed to meet the materialists on their ground. He could not refute their arguments. He had to fall back on the authority of the Scriptures, the repudiation of which had been the starting point of all philosophical thought in ancient India. Of all the great ancient rationalists, Kapila alone had admitted scriptural testimony as evidence. But that was only a formal concession. While declaring that the existence of God could not be proved, because there was no evidence, Kapila does not take scriptural testimony into account. Even the Vedanta Sutras themselves do not accept the Scriptures as answering all the questions raised by those dissatisfied with the dogmas of natural religion. 'Not having found the highest bliss in the Vedas, Sandilya studied the Sastras.[32] The latter contain primitive rationalism which rejects the childish faith of the Vedic religion.

So highly developed and powerful were the materialist and naturalist schools combatted by Sankaracharya, that whenever he tried to refute their arguments logically, he was driven to take up an essentially materialistic position. His pantheistic monism is inverted materialism. The Mayavad is a shamefaced recognition of the reality of the external world. It is only by degenerating into a dogmatic system of theology, which tries to reconcile even the gods of the Vedic natural religion with the metaphysical conception of Brahman, that Sankaracharya's system apparently escapes the glorious fate common to all systems of consistent pantheism. The fate is to corroborate the materialist view from the opposite direction. . . .

The rise and fall of materialism in ancient India approximately coincided with the same events in Greece. The period of spiritual darkness following thereupon was brought to a close in Europe by the reassertion of materialist and rationalist thoughts on the strength of the achievements of modern science. That did not happen in India. Consequently, the spiritual heritage of India still remains to be rescued from her cultural ruins. What prevented India from following the same course of spiritual development as Europe, after having done that up to only several hundred years ago, from the remotest days of human history?

In ancient Greece, philosophy was created by the class of merchant-princes, whose social position was antagonistic to the power and privilege of the priesthood. In ancient India the trading class never attained such a position in society. Self-sufficient village economy prevented the growth of trade on a national scale. The small surplus product of the village artisan was exchanged in local markets. Practically the entire surplus agricultural produce went for the payment of taxes. It is recorded that during the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era, commodities such as precious stones, spices, and silk, were exported from southern India to Greece and Rome. But the maritime trade was carried on by the Javanas (Greeks), who are reported to have crowded the markets of southern Indian ports, and even been employed as soldiers by the Dravidian kings. Later on, the carrying-trade on the same route passed on to the hand of the Arabs. Foreign trade overland, developed after the foundation of the Bactrian Kingdom, also was mostly carried on by the Javanas. Some trade in large volume, however, appears to have grown in the south, which fact explains the establishment and persistence of Hinayana Buddhism (the original philosophical form) in those parts. In the Brahmanical society of the north, development of trade was discouraged. In the earliest Brahmanical laws—of Manu and Kautilya—the trader does not figure as one of the main social classes. In this connection, it will be instructive to cite what Havell discovers as the cause of the spiritual superiority of Indo–Aryan culture:

> They [Vedas] represent the culture of a race of warrior–poets and philosophers who despised the arts of commerce and lived mostly by agriculture, with one hand on the sword and the other on the plough. They built no temples, but worshipped nature-spirits with simple sacrificial rites. . . . The Aegean, Babylonian and Dravidian cultures were essentially mercantile civilizations with a more limited spiritual outlook, though in the nature of things, they were more concerned with the happiness which lies in material possessions than in spiritual thoughts.[33]

When the more civilized Dravidians were subjugated by the pastoral Aryans, the latter imposed upon the former social laws which checked the growth of the trading class, and consequently of free thought. As regards 'the happiness of material possessions', the beef-eating and *soma*-drinking Vedic priests were not averse to it. But in order to maintain themselves in the position of power and privilege, they could not let the masses participate in that happiness. Hence the 'spiritual superiority' of the Indo–Aryan culture. The concern for the happiness of material possessions, not in the vulgar sense as was the case with the Vedic Rishis, but in the wide sense of conquering the forces of nature for the benefit of humanity, is the impulse to philosophic thought. Since the 'spiritually superior' Indo–Aryan culture of the Vedic era did not feel this concern, philosophy remained unknown until the rise of the more progressive class of traders could not be altogether checked by priestly domination.

Buddhism is usually interpreted as the revolt of the Kshatriyas against Brahmanism. To some extent, it was so; but the mercantile class also entered into the social background of the revolution. For example, according to Hiuen Tsang, the famous University at the great Nalanda Monastery was founded by the munificence 'of five-hundred merchants who were disciples of Buddha'.[34] The merchants must have attained some social importance under the Buddhist kings. Upon the restoration of Brahmanism, under the Guptas, they were again subjected to economic limitations and social discriminations.

The codes of Manu, compiled in the fourth century AD, placed the merchants under all sorts of disadvantages. It was from that time, that sea voyage came to be counted as one of the causes of 'impurity'. The missionary work of Asoka had promoted the habit of travelling over sea. Indian traders had been visiting the Malayan Islands and China. The result must have been a widening of vision which found its reflection in the Hinayana (philosophic) school of Buddhism which for a long time resisted Brahmanic reaction in southern India. Sea voyage was prohibited by Manu because it encouraged heretical views. In the absence of a mercantile class, as an independent and powerful social force, Indian speculative thought could not become philosophy, in the correct sense. And the absence itself was the product of the given social relations. Land was held by the Kshatriyas and the Brahmins—classes which, by their very social being, were hostile to trade. In order to be so powerful as to dispute the ideological monopoly of the priesthood, the freethinking merchants must grow out of the rich landed aristocracy. But in India, the latter was closely associated with the Brahmins. That relation was established in consequence of the ruinous civil war recorded in the Mahabharata. The Kshatriyas were so seriously weakened that they had to re-admit the supremacy of the Brahmins. This peculiar complex of social relations determined the specific form of Indian thought, and explains why materialism practically disappeared, after it had flourished so well in an earlier period.

Notes

[1] *Kathopanishad* 1. 1, 1. 2; *Svetāsvataropanishad*, 1. 1; *Brihadāranayakopanishad* 2. 4. 12.
[2] *Sānkarabrahmasūtrabhāshya*, 2. 2. 1, 2. 2. 3.
[3] *Sānkhyapravacanasūtram*,1. 44; *Vijnānabhikshu Bhāshya*,1. 44.
[4] *Sānkhyasutram* 1. 88; *Vijnānabhikshu Bhāshya*, 1. 87.
[5] *Tchāndogyopanishad*, 1. 9. 1.
[6] *Tchāndogya*, 8. 14. 1.
[7] *Brahmasūtrabhāshyam*, 1. 1. 21.
[8] *Kathopanishad*, 1. 8. 10.
[9] *Svetāsvataropanishad*, 6. 15.
[10] *Vaiseshikasūtram*, 7. 1. 20; *Nyāyasūtram*, 4. 2. 14; *Nyāyabhāshya*, 4. 2. 14.
[11] *Vaiseshikasūtram*,7. 1. 9.
[12] Ibid., 5. 2. 13.
[13] Ibid., 2. 1. 24.
[14] *Sānkarabrahmasūtrabhāshya*, 2. 2. 18.

[15] *Sānkhyakārikā*, 62; *Gaudapādabhāshya*.
[16] *Sānkhyasūtram*, 1. 42, 43.
[17] *Sānkhyasūtram*, 1. 78.
[18] Ibid., 1. 76.
[19] Ibid., 1. 67.
[20] Ibid., 1. 114, 115.
[21] *Sānkhyakārikā*.
[22] *Sānkhyasūtram*, 1. 75.
[23] Ibid., 1. 87.
[24] *Vijanānabhikshu Bhāshya*.
[25] *Sānkhyasūtram*, 1. 89.
[26] *Sarvadarsanasangraha*, ch 2; *Tattvasangraha*.
[27] *Tattvasangraha*, 32.
[28] *Sarvadarsanasangraha*, Ch 2.
[29] *Tattvasangraha*, 87, 88.
[30] *Nyāyasūtram*, 4. 1. 14.
[31] *Sānkarabrahmasūtrabhāshya*, 2. 2. 18.
[32] *Sānkarabrahmasūtrabhāshya*, 2. 2. 45.
[33] E. B. Havell, *The History of Aryan Rule in India*, New York, n. d.
[34] T. Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, 2 vols., London, 1904–5.

VI Modern Materialism

It must be clear from the foregoing chapters that materialism is not what it is vulgarly called, namely, the cult of 'eat, drink and be merry'. It is the explanation of the world without the assumption of anything supernatural. The efforts made throughout the ages for such an explanation have established a monistic view of the Universe, and revealed the substratum of everything—body, mind, soul—as a material substance; a physical entity,[1] largely known and progressively knowable: Existence precedes thought; things, ideas; matter, spirit.

Idealistic philosophy reverses the relation. But the antithesis of philosophical materialism can no longer be stated in religious terms. That would be too absurd in the age of scientific knowledge and rationalist mode of thought. A philosophical controversy must be conducted on a philosophical plane—with a philosophical terminology. Therefore, in modern times, spiritualism takes the arena against materialism in the deceptive garb of the idealist philosophy, which has been aptly characterized by Feuerbach as 'philosophical spiritualism'. The issue of the controversy has been reduced to a question of epistemology: the possibility of human mind to know it.

The materialist point of view that the world exists objectively, by itself, independent and irrespective of its being perceived by human consciousness, dislodges this latter from the place of primacy. This basic principle of Materialism could not be conclusively established except upon the firm foundation of the discoveries of modern science in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. On the other hand, the bold speculations and ingenious hypotheses of the rationalist and materialist thinkers ever since the Renaissance encouraged scientific enquiry. The cooperation of materialist thought and experimental science bore magnificent fruits in the eighteenth century.

The great materialist thinkers of the seventeenth century held that our ideas were but abstractions of the images of external objects received by the senses, and that the external objects were thus unconditionally knowable. The French Encyclopedists, in the following century, called 'those, who, conscious only of their own existence and of a succession of external sensations, do not admit anything else, protagonists of an extravagant system—the offspring of blindness itself.' (Diderot). The Encylopedists definitely held the view that our senses gave us true representations of outside objects, and sense-perceptions were the only source of ideas. According to them, sensation is a property of organic matter.[2] That *view, yet only a conjecture* at that time, was later on corroborated by the empirical investigations of the great Naturalists of the nineteenth century.

In 1758 appeared the great work of Helvetius, *The Mind* (*De l'Esprit*). It was the greatest treatise on ethics produced in the eighteenth century, and France led the thought of Europe in that period. The basic principles enunciated therein can be summarized as follows: The difference between man and other animals is the result of a difference in their external form; the structure of our body is the sole cause of our boasted superiority. This becomes evident when it is considered that thought is the produce of two faculties common to man and other animals, namely, the faculty of receiving impressions from external objects, and the faculty of remembering those impressions. All essential principles of our moral actions are deduced from this position; all notions of duty and virtue must be tested by their relation to senses; in other words, by the gross amount of physical enjoyment to which they give rise. This is the true basis of moral philosophy. The alternative view of morality, to be deceived by conventional expressions, has no other foundation except prejudice, born of ignorance.

Condillac was the greatest metaphysician of the century. He was a materialist. 'He found it utterly impossible to escape from those [materialist] tendencies towards the external world that governed his age.[3] In his famous *Treatise on Sensations* (*Traite des sensations*), he asserts that everything we know is the result of sensations, by which he means the effect produced on us by the action of the external world. With some looseness of expression, and perhaps some looseness of thought, Locke had assumed the separate existence of a power of reflection, and believed that, by means of that mysterious power, the product of sensations become available. He used the term 'reflection' so vaguely as to 'allow his disciples to make of his doctrine what they pleased'.[4] Moved by the prevailing temper of his time, Condillac would not admit any such distinction between sensation and reflection. He rejected the faculty of reflection as a source of ideas. He held that reflection partly is the channel through which ideas run from the senses, and that partly, in its origin, it is itself a sensation. He was definitely of the opinion that the faculties of man were solely caused by the operation of his senses. He argues that the judgments we form are ascribed to a divine influence, because it is a convenient mode of reasoning which has arisen from the difficulty of analysing them. By considering how our judgements actually arise we can remove those obscurities. 'In man, nature is the beginning of all, to nature we owe the whole of our knowledge. We instruct ourselves according to her lessons. The entire act of reasoning consists in continuing the work which she has appointed us to perform.'

The philosophical revolution, brought about by the bold materialistic doctrines of the French Encyclopedists, directly led to a tremendous advance of positive knowledge. The consequence of the growth of materialist thought has been described as follows:

> It was this dangerous, but plausible, principle which drew the attention of men from the Church to the State; which was seen in Helvetius, the most celebrated of the French moralists, and in Condillac, the most celebrated of the French metaphysicians. It was this same principle which, by increasing the reputation of Nature, induced the ablest thinkers to devote themselves to a study of her laws, and to abandon those other pursuits which had been popular in the preceding age. In consequence of this movement, such wonderful additions were made to every branch of physical science that more new truths concerning the external world were discovered in France during the latter half of the eighteenth century than during all the previous periods together.[5]

Epoch-making discoveries regarding the nature of heat, light, electricity and magnetism were made by Provost, Dulong, Fourier, D'Alibard, Coulomb, Frensel and a whole host of other lesser lights—all in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Modern chemistry was also created by French materialism in that period of great intellectual outburst. The father of this science, Lavoisier, lived in that period, together with other famous chemists like Fourcroy, de Morveau, Verdeil, etc. That was the age of great Buffon and Cuvier—founders of geology; zoology, anatomy, physiology and botany also received great impetus. Cuvier and Bichat are the fathers of biology. Cabanis founded modern physiology and psychology. Appreciating the achievements of those great scientists, all inspired by materialist thought, Buckle writes:

> By this union of geology and anatomy, there was first introduced into the study of nature a clear conception of the magnificent doctrine of universal change; while at the same time, there grew up by its side a conception, equally steady, of the regularity with which the changes are accomplished, and of the undeviating laws by which they are governed. Similar ideas have no doubt been held in preceding ages; but the great Frenchmen of the eighteenth century were the first to apply them to the entire structure of the globe, and who thus prepared the way for that still higher view to which in our time the most advanced thinkers are rapidly rising. For it is now beginning to be understood that, since every addition to knowledge affords fresh proof of the regularity with which all the changes of nature are conducted, we are bound to believe that the same regularity existed long before our little planet assumed its present form, and long before man trod the surface of the earth.[6]

In the nineteenth century, science, with its all-conquering methods, steadily advanced farther, drawing more and more subjects under its rule, yielding answers to more and more problems, while theology and metaphysics remained impotent to furnish convincing answers and were found constantly to be in flagrant contradiction with the certainties of experience. Of the three modes of explaining phenomena—theological, metaphysical, and scientific—the latter gained strength daily. Previously, all men had accepted the theological explanation of the world and society. But in proportion, as knowledge advanced, that explanation was discovered to be incessantly in contradiction with experience. As knowledge advanced, men withdrew more and more phenomena from the protection of supernatural agencies, and placed them under the jurisdiction of the mechanistic laws of nature; gods and supernatural entities were deposed for good.

In 1809, Lorenz Oken wrote his *Manual of the Philosophy of Nature*, in which he advanced the theory that the phenomenon of life in all organisms originates in a common chemical substance. The theory of evolution by biological use and disuse had been suggested by Lamarck even before that. In 1815 was published Lamarck's *Natural History* which first introduced the term 'biology'. Lamarck wrote: 'Life is purely a phenomenon. All the phenomena of life depend on mechanical, physical, and chemical causes which are inherent in the nature of matter itself. The simplest animal and the simplest plant, which stand at the lowest point in the scale of organization, have originated and still originate by spontaneous generation. All animate natural bodies or organisms are subject to the same laws as inanimate natural bodies. The ideas and actions of the understanding are motional phenomena of the central nervous system.'

The investigation initiated by the bold hypotheses of Lamarck and Oken led to positively revolutionary discoveries. Darwin immensely improved the Lamarckian theory of descent with the doctrine of natural selection. The clear and unavoidable implications of Darwinism left absolutely no room for a Creator, and consequently for the traditional religious prejudices, nor for the speculation about spiritual essence of the Universe. Darwinism was the object of a bitter attack by the Church theologists, pious philosophers, and even many scientists of the time. Darwin was damned as the 'greatest atheist'. He himself was staggered by the revolutionary implications of his great scientific discoveries. But once ideas are created, they move with their own momentum. In spite of Darwin's ambiguous attitude regarding the philosophical implications of his scientific discoveries, they asserted themselves through the work of his disciples. Haeckel, for example, found sufficient ground for the assumption that there is 'in the foundation-stones of the structure of matter itself a property similar to sensation.' Other eminent biologists, pursuing their own lines of research, arrived at similar conclusions, in the light of which the principles of materialist epistemology came out of the domains of hypothetical conjecture, to be established as empirically verified philosophical concepts.

Scientific knowledge about the history of the Universe shows that organic beings did not exist on this earth from eternity. They could not, owing to the uninhabitable state of this planet as well as the other members of the solar system. Only at a certain stage of the physical growth of the earth, organisms came into being. The theories of descent and natural selection can be traced back to that remote point in the history of our globe. Then arises the question: How did the first organism grow? The German scientist Haeckel was the first to raise the question boldly, and answer it with the hypothesis of spontaneous generation.

> This is the point at which most naturalists, even at the present day, are inclined to give up the attempt at natural explanation, and take refuge in the miracle of an inconceivable creation. In doing so, they quit the domain of scientific knowledge, and renounce all further insight into the eternal laws which have determined nature's history. But before despondingly taking such a step, and before we despair of the possibility of any knowledge of this important process, we may at least make an attempt to understand it.[7]

Haeckel himself held the key to the problem which he so modestly approached. It was in his discovery of the very simplest form of organism which he described as 'organisms without organs'. He discovered them floating on the sea-water.

> They are very small living corpuscles which strictly speaking do not deserve the name of organism, not compound of any organs at all, but consist entirely of shapeless, simple, homogeneous matter. The body of one of these is nothing more than a shapeless, mobile, little lump of mucus or slime, consisting of an albuminous combination of carbon. Simpler or more imperfect organisms we cannot possibly conceive.[8]

The English scientist Thomas Huxley also discovered a similar form of lowest oganism in the depths of the ocean. His hypothesis having thus been verified by independent discovery, Haeckel wrote:

> On account of the perfect homogeneity of the albuminous substance of their bodies, on account of their utter want of heterogeneous particles, these are more closely connected with anorgana than with organism, and evidently form the transition between the inorganic and the organic worlds of bodies, as is necessitated by the hypothesis of spontaneous generation.

The discovery of these simplest and lowest organisms threw light upon the secrets of life. No room was left for the persistent tradition or superstition about the miraculous origin of life. The hypothesis of spontaneous generation was verified. In the time of Lamarck and later on, the probability of the hypothesis was doubted, because the lowest known forms of organism were of relatively composite nature. But the primitive forms discovered by Haeckel and Huxley were not composite organisms, not aggregates of several organs; they 'consist solely of a single chemical combination, and yet grow, nourish and propagate themselves. [Haekel]'. So, a simple compound of carbon was found to be the seed of original life—the totality of the molecular motion of matter, which, in higher forms of organisms, is endowed with the dignity of the mysterious, supernatural, 'Vital force' (soul). Since then, organic chemistry discovered that the most elementary substratum, which brings into evidence the play of the mysterious vital force, was a combination of carbon with oxygen, hydrogen, and nitrogen. This 'material' playground of the supernatural vital force is an albuminous substance. Originally, all organisms are simple lumps of such albuminous formations, called protoplasm.

There is no difference between the organic and inorganic matter. All living bodies are formed out of such chemical elements as carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, sulphur, potassium, sodium, etc. No such elements have been found in vegetable and animal bodies as are absent in the inorganic substances. When a certain combination of a number of chemical elements produces the phenomenon of life, it enters into the organic domain. The primary manifestation of this phenomenon is the process of nutrition and multiplication.

By boldly establishing the Lamarckian hypothesis of spontaneous generation, Haeckel completed Darwinism as a pillar of the modern materialist philosophy. He wrote:

> A conception of an immaterial force, which at first creates matter, is an article of faith which has nothing whatsoever to do with human science. Where faith commences, science ends. These two arts of human mind must strictly be kept apart from each other. Faith has its origin in the poetic imagination; knowledge, on the other hand, originates in the reason and intelligence of man. Science has to pluck the blessed fruits from the tree of knowledge, unconcerned whether these conquests trench upon the poetical imaginings of faith or not.

Darwinism elaborated by Haeckel and subsequently by a number of other scientists, provided an unshakeable foundation of knowledge to materialist philosophy. . . .

The discoveries in the field of geology, paleontology, astronomy, chemistry, physics, biology, [have] made it a matter of common knowledge that the physical existence of the Universe preceded the appearance of man by ages of incalculable duration. The Universe is composed of a countless multitude of stars, of which the sun is one, and the earth is only a satellite of the sun. A little contemplation of these facts makes it evident how insignificant a factor human consciousness is.

The comparative insignificance of human consciousness, however, is only quantitative. Qualitatively, its importance is immense. That is demonstrated by the very ability to acquire the knowledge which lays bare its quantitative insignificance in comparison with the vast background of the physical being. Having grown out of matter, the spirit dominates matter. The epic of the struggle for this domination is the history of man. The consciousness of the comparative, quantitative, insignificance of the spirit—the recognition of the fact of its subordination to matter—generally does not, in the least, underestimate its unlimited potentiality; cannot belittle the glory of its achievements in the realm of positive knowledge. On the contrary, this recognition sets human spirit really free by liberating it from the fetters of teleology. For the first time, human spirit (call it soul, if you please) stands on its own legs, shines not as the reflection of an unseen light, but in the native effulgence of its own being. When man feels the endless potentialities of his own mind, the genesis of which is no metaphysical mystery, it is no longer necessary for him to believe in any supernatural force governing his destiny or guiding his footsteps.

The knowledge that life occupies such an insignificant place in the physical vastness of the Universe reveals the absurdity of the teleological conception of religion, that everything happens according to a divine purpose. Whatever religious view you may take, be it the Mosaic doctrine of creation, or the pantheistic idea of emanation (Vedanta), man occupies the centre of the stage. Either God created the world for the benefit of man, or the purpose of the whole scheme of the Universe is to provide a stage setting for the whimsical peregrinations of the soul. Both these doctrines, together with the numerous variations of each, are shattered by the discovery that life, in any form, occupies an infinitesimally small place in the order of the physical Universe, and is scarcely a minute old compared to the incalculable age of its material background.

God does not appear to be the omnipotent and omniscient master-builder as believed by religious men. If, in order to create the tiny speck of dirt inhabited by crawling bits of carbohydrates, he had to waste the immeasurable mass of matter constituting the Universe, and spend the incalculable trillions of years in that superb feat of wastefulness, he has certainly not as much ability or power or intelligence as any mortal architect or structural engineer. No intelligent man can accept such a God as the arbitrary mentor of his destiny. It is simply absurd. Had the Universe been created by an omnipotent and omniscient God for the benefit of man, the latter would have been given a higher place in it. As regards the pantheistic religious view (Vedantism), it is equally absurd. How could the Universe be the playground of the soul, since it existed through countless ages without any trace of life? In the absence of life, in any form, there can be no consciousness which is detected in organic matter only in a comparatively high level of evolution. In the absence of consciousness, there cannot be any question of an intelligent purpose. The physical Universe is, indeed, governed by definite laws, but, being in an entirely lifeless state, cannot be the vehicle of an intelligent purpose. Its laws are purely mechanistic, being but variations of motion inseparable from the existence of matter. The natural history of the earth again proves conclusively that intelligence is comparatively new phenomenon of living matter, which is a nothing more mysterious than inanimate matter subjected to certain physico-chemical processes. Throughout the entire scheme of the Universe, there is to be found neither the hand of the almighty God nor any intelligent purpose. . . .

A pupil of Hegel, Feuerbach came to the conclusion that the Absolute Idealism of his teacher was the highest culmination of classical philosophy, and held that, for the future, philosophy must strike out a new path. He stated the cardinal principles of the 'New Philosophy' in the following memorable words: 'Thought is conditioned by existence, not existence by thought. Being is self-determined, has its foundation in itself.' The traditionally believed relation between soul and body, mind and matter, is here reversed. Religious and metaphysical categories, such as God, Soul, First Principle, Final Cause, did not create man, but they are the creations of man's imagination. This thesis was brilliantly elaborated in Feuerbach's great work, *The Essence of Christiantity* (*Das Wesen des Christentums*). It is a masterpiece of religious criticism, applicable theoretically to all religions.

The following is a summary of Feuerbach's new Philosophy: 'The material world is accessible to our senses. The world to which we belong is the only real world; our consciousness and our thought are engendered by a material organ (brain)—a part of the body. Matter is not created by spirit; spirit itself is but the highest product of matter.' Feuerbach made full use of the Hegelian criticism of the concept of the 'thing-in-itself'—the last refuge of metaphysics and therefore of religion. Hegel said: 'If you know all the qualities of a thing, you know the thing-in-itself; nothing remains but the fact that the said thing exists outside us; and when your senses have taught you that fact, you have grasped the last remnant of the thing-in-itself.' These words of the greatest and most consistent modern idealist philosopher forecast many discoveries of the natural sciences and were pregnant with the germs of the materialist epistemology which were to fructify so magnificently under the care of his pupils Feuerbach, Marx, and Engels.

In the place of the time-honoured religious, theological, and metaphysical dogmas, Feuerbach placed man—of flesh and blood—in the centre of things, and proceeded to interpret everything, including those dogmas, by that standard. That was an all-shattering method. Everything appeared in a new light. The clay feet of old gods were exposed. The human essence of divine conceptions was laid bare. Theological mysteries were revealed as the result of anthropomorphic preoccupations.

The carnal core of religion was discovered. Faith was found to be the expression of egoism. In short, Feuerbach's materialist criticism pulled down the religio–theo–metaphysical superstructure of civilization, not only Western, but as a whole. His criticism was not historical, but theoretical, equally applicable to any particular subject.

But Feuerbach's philosophy was not without a flaw. It was in its point of departure, in his failure to see things in a process. The being of man determines his consciousness, and being is governed by its own laws. What are those laws? How do they operate? Feuerbach omitted to answer these fundamental questions. Man explained everything, but the man himself remained unexplained, and appeared as an absolute category.

Marx and Engels took up the thread at this critical point. They replaced Feuerbach's abstract conception of man by the dynamic conception of a social being—a factor involved in a process of continuous change. The basic principles of materialism were corrected and amplified by them, and restated in the following unambiguous form: 'It is not the consciousness of men which determines existence; but on the contrary, it is their social existence which determines their consciousness.'[9] The consciousness of man is, indeed, determined by his physical existence; but the evolution of human thought—the spiritual progress of man—is influenced by social conditions which, in their turn, change the conditions of the physical being of man. The view that man is an absolute standard irresistibly leads to the conclusion that he must think similarly in all ages, under all circumstances.

All possible ambiguity about the 'being' of man, which determines his consciousness, is definitely removed by the following view of man's relation to nature: 'By acting on nature, outside himself, and transforming it, man simultaneously changes his own nature'[10] (Karl Marx). The physical being of man is not a constant category. It implies an inseparable, eternal, relation with nature, man himself being a part of nature; and this relation—the most vital fact of man's being—is not a relation of passive contemplation, but of action which, therefore, is the essence of his being and as such determines his consciousness. The struggle for freedom from the ruthlessness of nature, as against the struggle for existence through adaptation, separates man from the lower animals. That struggle, in its turn, is undertaken by man not singly, but collectively. From his very birth (anthropologically) man is a social being. Therefore, the laws governing man's being are to be sought in his social relations, that is, in the terms and conditions on which human beings live together.

Aided by the discoveries of the natural sciences as well as by the Hegelian dialectic method of reasoning,[11] Marx made an exhaustive investigation in the field of social history, and established the fact that the consciousness of man, after all, is determined 'by the way he makes his living'. Since man's modes of making his living (and the modes of living itself) change from time to time, the forms of his thought and the modes of expressing it change correspondingly.

'The great fundamental question of all philosophies', as Engels stated the proposition, 'is connected with the relation between thought and existence, between spirit and nature.' His answer to this fundamental question of philosophy is very definite: 'Materialism regards nature as primary, and spirit as secondary.' Having clearly and concisely stated the basic principle of materialism, Engels raises questions concerning the theory of cognition: 'The question of the relationship of thinking and being has another side. In what relation do our thoughts, with regard to the world surrounding us, stand to the world itself? Is our thought in a position to recognize the real world? Can we, in our ideas and notions of the real world, produce a correct reflection of the reality?'[12] The answer to these fundamental questions of epistemology differentiates the two contending systems of philosophy, namely, materialism and idealism, the latter being, as characterized by Feuerbach, 'philosophical spiritualism'.

The idealist doctrine that a mysterious gulf separates, for ever, the phenomenal world from the 'world in itself' is nothing but the familiar religio–theological juxtaposition of spirit and matter, soul and body, God and nature, as thesis and antithesis, as freedom and bondage, as reality and illusion. 'It is an abyss', to quote Feuerbach once again, 'created by the priests and adopted by the professors of philosophy'. Materialism does not recognize this unbridgeable gulf, and experimental science has demonstrated beyond a shadow of doubt that no such gulf exists except in the fantasy of 'philosophical spiritualism'. . . .

On the basis of the successive stages of the development of modern materialistic epistemology, a basis subsequently rendered unshakeable by the discoveries of natural sciences, Marx and Engels built up the complete and comprehensive structure of historical materialism. The fundamental epistemological principles of Marxian materialism are the following:

> 1. Things exist independently of our consciousness, independently of our sensations. 2. There is absolutely no difference between a phenomenon and the thing-in-itself, and there can be none. The difference is only between what is already known and what is yet unknown. 3. In the theory of knowledge, as in other branches of science, we must think dialectically, that is, we must not regard our knowledge as ready-made and unchangeable, but must determine how from ignorance knowledge is gradually built up, and how incomplete and inexact knowledge becomes more complete and more exact.[13]

The means to knowledge is action, not passive contemplation. As an object of passive contemplation, nature would always remain an unfathomable mystery. Whether the senses supply us with true pictures of outside objects, can be ascertained only by going out of ourselves, by reaching out to the objects and comparing them with our perceptions of them. The taste of the pudding is in eating. The 'thing-in-itself' ceases to be unknowable, becomes fully and positively known, as soon as we make it a thing-for-us. Nor is this approach to nature a new departure. Man's relation with nature has been from the very beginning not of passive contemplation, but of action. When the primitive man gathered fruit from the tree or caught fish from the river, and ate them to satisfy his hunger, he acquired definite knowledge about the things called fruit and fish. No amount of philosophical hair-splitting could ever persuade him to believe that the 'fruit-in-itself' or the 'fish-in-itself' might be something different from the images they made on his retina. The act of eating, and the result of that act—satisfaction of hunger—were fully convincing. Let a Berkeley or a Sankaracharya try to teach the man, consciously standing in the relation of activity to nature, that the fruit he eats is an illusion, that the fish is a fantasy; he would simply laugh the wise man out of court.

Man's relation to nature has always remained one of action, but religion, theology, religious philosophy, and metaphysics made him forget the real essence of his being. Just as, by virtue of his ever-increasing activity, man's knowledge of nature increased, correspondingly, he was taught the blessed doctrine that ideas were not the abstractions of his activities; they existed by themselves, inspiring his activities. Practice, the very basis of life, was totally divorced from the theory of life. The theory of life was not to be derived from, and verified by, the practice of life. The theory of life was a matter of divine inspiration—a mysterious, but imperative voice from 'the other side' where the mind of man cannot penetrate. The theory of life, which should dictate the practice of life, was thus made entirely independent of the latter, Sensual knowledge, that is, the real knowledge acquired by man in [the] course of his action upon nature, was branded as an illusion, at the best, an inferior sort of knowledge which is of no value for solving the 'profound' metaphysical problems of life.

The root cause of this absurd confusion, as a matter of fact, falsification, in the realm of epistemology, was unearthed by Marx and Engels.

> From that moment [when the theory of life is separated from the practice of life, through the division of labour into spiritual and material], consciousness may in reality imagine that it is something other than the consciousness of existing things. From the moment that consciousness begins really to imagine something, without imagining something real, from that time onward it finds itself in a position to emancipate itself from the world, and proceed to the formation of phantoms as basic elements of knowledge—absolute categories of truth, eternal—and immutable.[14]

The phenomenal progress of the natural sciences in the nineteenth century exposed the utter absurdity of the 'spiritualist' doctrine of epistemology which had condemned man to eternal ignorance, and proclaimed the real world an illusion. Neither science nor philosophical materialism claims absolute knowledge. That is the stock-in-trade of the religionists, modern as well as ancient, Eastern as well as Western. Only by rejecting the dogma of absolute knowledge, can we appreciate knowledge in its native spiritual dignity and sublimeness. Only then does human spirit appear in the perspective of infinity. Science does not put forward the stupid claim that it knows everything. That would be tantamount to the hymn at the funeral of humanity. For, if everything is known, there will be nothing more to know or do, and life will automatically come to an end. What science has proved is that there is nothing unknowable; and materialist philosophy adds the corollary that, whatever is within the ken of human consciousness is material, because, something immaterial (spiritual, in the traditional sense) can never be cognizable to human mind, itself a product of matter in a particular state of organization. Science visualizes, *in reality*, what religion and metaphysics have only idly imagined, namely, the omnipotence and omniscience of human soul—not in space, but in time. Omnipotence and omniscience, to be real, must be seen as a process—in terms of time. The materialist theory of knowledge endows human spirit even with the attribute of immortality; the consciousness of the man of a given epoch is the embodiment of knowledge accumulated in the past, and will continue to live in the endless progress of knowledge in the future. The materialist theory of knowledge can be summarized as follows:

Sense-perceptions, human experience, gained not in passive contemplation, but in active functioning of the human organism, and having for their source the material world existing objectively outside our consciousness, independent of it, is the point of departure of all knowledge. There is no end to the process of acquiring such knowledge; the more we know, there will be further to know; and since every step forward in the process of enlightenment corrects, adds to, amplifies our previous stock of knowledge, there is no such thing as perfect knowledge or absolute truth.[15]

The natural philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, though hindered by their poetical imagination from taking a strictly scientific attitude, nevertheless stood on the ground of materialism, inasmuch as most of them held the activist theory of life. Goethe, for example, wrote: 'I should not know what to do with eternal beatitude, unless it would offer me new tasks and difficulties to be conquered. But they will be provided. We need only look at the planets and the sun; there we shall also have nuts to crack.' Lessing also said the same thing in different words: 'If the Almighty offered me the choice between truth and the search for the truth, I would unhesitatingly take the latter.' Here we have the spirit of philosophical materialism breathed by poetic geniuses whose works will ever remain among the most beautiful specimens of the creation of human spirit.

Notes

[1] The discoveries of Quantum Physics have indeed made the classical notion of matter untenable. But they do not suggest that the old philosophical concept of substance has turned out to be a metaphysical category or it can be altogether discarded. The substratum of the Universe is not matter as traditionally conceived; but it is physical as against mental or spiritual. It is a measurable entity. Therefore, to obviate prejudiced criticism, the philosophy hitherto called Materialism may be renamed Physical Realism.

[2] *Dialogue of D'Alembert and Diderot.*

[3] Buckle, *History of Civilisation.*

[4] Whewell, *History of Moral Philosophy.*

[5] Buckle, *History of Civilisation.*

[6] Buckle, *History of Civilisation.*

[7] Ernst Haeckel, *The History of Creation.*

[8] Ernst Haeckel, *General Morphology.*

[9] Marx went too far. The proposition that consciousness is determined by being does not necessarily lead to economic determinism. The economic interpretation of history does not logically follow from the materialist philosophy. On the contrary, the one contradicts the other, Marxian economic determinism having essentially a teleological implication.

[10] Karl Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach.*

[11] While modern scientific knowledge reinforced the empirical foundation of the materialist philosophy, by associating it with Hegelian dialectics, Marx seriously weakened it. 'The basic error in the philosophical thinking of the founders of dialectical Materialism was to confound logic with ontology. In the Marxist system, dialectic is the fundamental law of thought, and it is also a description of the process of nature, biological as well as inanimate. The subject matter of a branch of metaphysical enquiry is confounded with the instrument for conducting that enquiry. In Marxist philosophy, logic as well as ontology bear the identical label of dialectic. Confusion, therefore, is inevitable.' (Editorial Notes, *The Marxian Way*, Vol. II, no. 4).

[12] Engels, *Feuerbach: The Outcome of Classical Philosophy.*

[13] Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism.*

[14] Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach.*

[15] Objective truth is not absolute; it is modified by increase in the knowledge of reality.

THE HISTORICAL ROLE OF ISLAM

I Introduction
II The Mission of Islam
III Social and Historical Background of Islam
IV The Causes of Triumph
V Mohammad and His Teachings
VI Islamic Philosophy
VII Islam and India

Introductory editorial note

In his letter of 7 December 1932 to Ellen Gottschalk from Central Prison, Bareilly, Roy wrote: 'Lately, I have been doing a number of rather longish essays on a variety of subjects. I have just finished a very interesting one: On the Historical Role of Islam. I am very satisfied with the product.' The reference definitely places the first draft of the book in the second half of 1932.

This draft is to be found in the second volume of the Prison Manuscripts. After completing his discussion of Sankhya philosophy, Roy started on verso sheet no. 10 of this volume the theme of Arab contribution to the history of civilization. He mentions the Saracens, the significance of the Prophet Mohammad, and discusses rationalism in Islam, specifically mentioning among others Al-Farabi, Al-Hassan, Avicena, Al-Gazali, Averroes, and some of the enlightened Califs. These preliminary notes are brought to a close on recto sheet no. 16 (altogether thirteen handwritten pages) when the survey moves to Roger Bacon, Giordano Bruno, Descartes and the Western rationalist philosophers. Sheet nos. 188 to 85 are written in reverse order. On verso sheet no. 162 the study is resumed under the title 'On the Historical Role of Islam' and this is concluded on recto sheet no. 132 (sixty-one handwritten pages). With minor revisions and some editing by the author, *The Historical Role* was published in 1937 by Vora & Company, Bombay. The total number of pages in this printed edition was 106. The book has since then gone into a number of editions and has been translated into several Indian languages. Indeed, it has proved to be Roy's most popular book, especially amongst educated Muslims in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

Roy wrote this book in jail when the Hindu and the Muslim communities in the Indian subcontinent were rapidly moving away from one another. After the death of Chitta Ranjan Das in 1925, there was hardly any Hindu political leader who enjoyed the trust of the emerging Muslim élites that were belatedly trying to assert their collective identity as a community. Looking back, the terrible communal riots of 1926 would now seem to have been a historic landmark anticipating the tragic occurrences of the next two decades. In 1928 M. A. Jinnah, who had for many years worked for the reconciliation of the two communities, left the Congress in disgust because he was opposed to the Nehru Report, but even more because of the shabby and humiliating treatment he received from the Congress leaders. In March 1931, Hindu–Muslim riots took place on a large scale in Kanpur. These were, of course, conflicts of politico–economic interests between the élites of the two communities which the foreign rulers sought to sharpen. Roy was fully aware of this, but he was also convinced that India's communal problem owed much to Hindu ignorance, prejudice, and superiority complex.

'The orthodox Hindu', he wrote, 'looks upon his Muslim neighbour as an inferior being.' On the other hand, few Muslims of today are 'conscious of the glorious role played on the stage of history by the faith they profess. Many disown and repudiate the rationalism and scepticism of the Arabs as deviations from the teaching of the Koran.' He wrote this longish essay in jail from the conviction that 'knowledge of Islam's contribution to human culture and proper appreciation of the historical value of that contribution would shock the Hindus out of their arrogant self-satisfaction, and cure the narrow-mindedness of the Muslims of our day by bringing them face to face with the true spirit of the faith they profess' (*Historical Role*, concluding sentence).

It is to be noted that although during his early years Roy imbibed the spirit of extremist nationalism which had in India a markedly Hindu revivalist orientation and was distrustful of the Muslims (the underground revolutionary movement of which Roy had become a principal organizer consisted almost exclusively of educated high-caste Hindu membership), by the time he published his first books in Mexico he had already emancipated himself from all communal prejudice. In *La India, Su Pasado, Su Presente Y Su Porvenir* (1918) he wrote: 'The Mohammedans adopted India as their own, forming an integral part of the society. Their government was in all aspects indigenous, maintained and directed equally by Hindus and Mohammedans.' He also quoted here the testimonies of various foreign visitors as 'sufficient proof of the economic prosperity and social tranquility of India in the Muslim period' (*Selected Works of M. N. Roy, Vol.I*, p. 99). Marxism in the following years deepened his secularist understanding and attitude. In October 1920 when he formed the émigré Communist Party of India in Tashkent, his first recruits were drawn from the Muslim *muhajirin* who had crossed from India into Afghanistan in the wake of the Khilafat movement. The Party's first elected secretary was Mohammad Shafiq Siddiqui. The majority of the Indian students at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East (KUTV, 1921) and before that in the Induski Kurs (1920–1) were Muslims. Of the five individuals who became Roy's principal contacts in the early twenties in the groups at five 'communist centres' in India, three were Muslims: Shaukat Usmani, Ghulam Hussain, and Muzaffar Ahmad. For quite some time during the twenties Roy's principal Indian assistant in Europe was Ghulam Ambia Khan Luhani. After Roy's break with the Comintern he came to rely for a number of years for organizational work on Tayab Ali Shaikh.

If Marxism nourished his growing secularism, these personal contacts and experiences must have also quickened his appreciation of and interest in Islam. *The Historical Role*, however, does not seem to owe much to Marx's writings. Instead, the two historians who clearly influenced his view of this role were Edward Gibbon, author of *The*

Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, and F. W. Draper, author of the *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*. We know from the *Prison Letters* as well as the manuscripts that he had both of these monumental works among his collection of books in jail despatched by friends at his request. He mentions them in his footnotes and quotes from them in the text.

Readers will immediately recognize that even after the passage of over sixty years this essay still has very high relevance to the contemporary situation in South Asia. The published work consisted of seven chapters under the following titles: Introduction; The Mission of Islam; Social and Historical Background of Islam; The Causes of Triumph; Mohammad and his Teachings; Islamic Philosophy; and Islam and India. Considerations of space have forced me to excise a few passages which are indicated by ellipses. I have, however, tried to ensure that the argument of the essay remains intact and is not impaired in any way by the excisions. Roy's footnotes appear as notes at the end of each chapter.

SNR.

I Introduction

The apparently sudden rise and the dramatic expansion of Mohammedanism constitutes a most fascinating chapter in the history of mankind. A dispassionate study of this chapter is of great importance in the present fateful period of the history of India. The scientific value of the study by itself is great, and the meritorious quest for knowledge is sure to be handsomely rewarded. But with us, today in India, particularly with the Hindus, a proper understanding of the historical role of Islam and the contribution it has made to human culture has acquired a supreme political importance. . . .

. . . Indeed, there is no other example of two communities living together in the same country for so many hundred years, and yet having so little appreciation of each other's culture. No civilized people in the world is so ignorant of Islamic history and contemptuous of the Mohammedan religion as the Hindus. Spiritual imperialism is an outstanding feature of our nationalist ideology. But this nasty spirit is the most pronounced in relation to Mohammedanism. The current notion of the teaching of the Arabian Prophet is extremely ill-informed. The average educated Hindu has little knowledge of, and no appreciation for, the immense revolutionary significance of Islam, and the great cultural consequences of that revolution. The prevailing notions could be laughed at as ridiculous, were they not so pregnant with harmful consequences. These notions should be combatted for the sake of the Indian people as well as in the interest of science and historical truth. A proper appreciation of the cultural significance of Islam is of supreme importance in this crucial period of the history of India.

The great historian Gibbon describes the rise and expansion of Islam as 'one of the most memorable revolutions which has impressed a new and lasting character on the nations of the globe'. One is simply amazed to contemplate the incredible rapidity with which the two mightiest empires of the ancient time were subverted by the comparatively small bands of nomads issuing from the Arabian desert, fired with the zeal of a new faith. Hardly fifty years had passed since Mohammad assumed the role of the singular Prophet spreading his Message of Peace at the point of the sword, when his followers victoriously planted the banner of Islam on the confines of India on the one side, and on the shores of the Atlantic on the other. The first Khalifs of Damascus reigned over an Empire which could not be crossed in less than five months on the fleetest camel. At the end of the first century of the Hegira, the 'Commanders of the Faithful' were the most powerful rulers of the world. . . .

Let a modern historian describe the miracle of the rise of Islam.

> Nowhere was there a vestige of an Arabian state, of a regular army, or of a common political ambition. The Arabs were poets, dreamers, fighters, traders; they were not politicians, traders; they were not politicians. Nor had they found in religion a stabilizing or unifying power. They practised a low form of polytheism. . . . A hundred years later, these obscure savages had achieved for themselves the position of a great world power. They had conquered Syria and Egypt, they had overwhelmed and converted Persia, mastered Western Turkestan and part of Punjab. They had wrested Africa from the Byzantines and the Berbers, Spain from the Visigoths. In the West they threatened France, in the East Constantinople. Their fleets, built in Alexandria or the Syrian ports, rode the waters of the Mediterranean, pillaged the Greek islands and challenged the naval power of the Byzantine Empire. Their success had been won so easily, the Persians and Berbers of the Atlas Mountains alone offering a serious resistance, that at the beginning of the eighth century it must have seemed an open question whether any final obstacle could be opposed to their victorious course. The Mediterranean had ceased to be a Roman lake. From one end of Europe to the other, the Christian states found themselves confronted with the challenge of a new Oriental civilization founded on a new Oriental faith.[1]

How did that stupendous miracle happen? That has been one of the baffling questions for historians. Today the educated world has rejected the vulgar theory that the rise of Islam was a triumph of fanaticism over sober and tolerant peoples. The phenomenal success of Islam was primarily due to its revolutionary significance and its ability to lead the masses out of the hopeless situation created by the decay of the antique civilizations not only of Greece and Rome but of Persia and China—and of India.

Note

[1] H. A. L. Fisher, *A History of Europe*, pp. 137–8.

II The Mission of Islam

Vulgar interpreters of the Islamic history lay stress upon its military achievements, either to praise or to deprecate its far-reaching revolutionary significance. If the undoubtedly brilliant military conquests of the Saracens were the only measure of the historic role of Islam, then it would not be a unique historical phenomenon. . . .

The martial victories of the followers of the Arabian Prophet were but the prelude to a more magnificent and lasting performance in the social and cultural fields. They only created the conditions for political unity which opened up an era of economic prosperity and spiritual progress. The stupendous ruins of the Roman and Persian Empires had to be cleared away so that a new social order could rise with new ideas and new ideals. The dark superstition of the Magian mysticism and the corrupt atmosphere of the Greek Church vitiated the spiritual life of the subjects of the decrepit Persian and Byzantine Empires rendering all moral and intellectual progress impossible. The severe monotheism of Mohammad wielded the formidable scimitar of the Saracen not only to destroy the profane idolatry of the Arbian tribes; it also proved to be the invincible instrument of history for freeing a considerable section of mankind from the evil spirit of Zoroaster as well as from degenerate Christianity given to the superstition of miracle-mongering, to the deadly disease of monasticism, and to the idolatrous worship of Saints. The amazing achievements of Saracen arms only prove that they were wielded in the service of history—for the progress of humanity.

The rich spiritual legacy of the glorious civilization of ancient Greece was almost buried under the dreary ruins of the Roman Empire, and lost in the darkness of Christian superstition. The grand mission of rescuing the invaluable patrimony, which eventually enabled the peoples of Europe to emerge from the depressing gloom of the holy middle-ages and build the marvellous monument of modern civilization, belonged to the Saracen arms, and to the social–political structure erected on the basis of Islamic Monotheism. The sword of Islam, wielded ostensibly in the service of God, actually contributed to the victory of a new social force—the blossoming of a new intellectual life—which eventually dug the grave of all religions and faiths.

Islam rose rather as a political movement than a religion in the strictest sense of the word. In the initial stages of its history, it was essentially a call for the unity of the nomadic tribes inhabiting the Arabian desert. Upon its speedy realization, the politico–religious unitarian doctrine became the flag under which the Asiatic and African provinces of the

Roman Empire survived the dissolution of the antique social order. The previous revolt had miscarried itself. Christianity had lost its original revolutionary fervour, becoming, on the one hand, the ideology of social dissolution (Monasticism), and a prop for the decaying Empire, on the other. But the social crisis continued, aggravated by the degeneration of Christianity. The message of hope and salvation came from the Caravan traders of Arabia who had stood outside the corrupting atmosphere of the decomposed Roman world, and prospered by their advantageous position. The 'Revolt of Islam' saved humanity.

A famous authority on Islamic history writes the following about the mission of Mohammad:

> He found a whole nation in the full tide of rapid improvement, eagerly in search of knowledge and power. The excitement in the public mind of Arabia, which produced the mission of Mahamet, induced many other prophets to make their appearance during his lifetime.[1]

The people, for whom Islamic history is summarized in the exploits of fanatical hordes, dramatically offering the dismayed world the choice between the Koran and the sword, with the blood-curdling cry of 'Allah ho Akbar', do not know, or conveniently overlook, that only the immediate successors of Mohammad occupied themselves solely with temporal and religious conquests; and even they were distinguished from the barbarian ravishers of humanity like Alaric, Attila, Genseric, Chengis, or Tamerlane, by the nobility of character, purity of purpose, and piety of spirit. Their devoutness might have been fortified by superstition, but was not stained by hypocrisy. Their fanaticism was softened by generosity and sound common sense. Their ambition was remarkably free from selfishness. Godliness, for them, was not a veil for greediness.

There are few figures in history more romantic, more devout, more sincere, and more modest than the first 'Commander of the Faithful'—Abu Bakr. His memorable injunction to the 'Army of God' ran:

> Be just; the unjust never prosper. Be valiant; die rather than yield. Be merciful; slay neither old men, nor women, nor children. Destroy neither fruit trees, nor grains, nor cattle. Keep your word even to your enemy. Molest not those men who live retired from the world.

The irresistible march of the 'Army of God' bears testimony to the fact that this remarkable injunction was uttered sincerely by the venerable chief, and obeyed strictly by the devout followers.

Everywhere the Saracen invaders were welcomed as deliverers by peoples oppressed, tyrannized, and tormented by Byzantine corruption, Persian despotism, and Christian superstition. Fanatically faithful to the revolutionary teachings of the Prophet, and obediently acting according to the noble, wise, and eminently practical injunctions of the Khalif, the Saracen invaders easily enlisted the sympathy and support of the peoples they conquered. No invader can establish an abiding domination over conquered peoples, except with their active support or tacit toleration.

The second Khalif, Omar, whose impetuous horsemen had pushed their victorious march through the Persian Empire, to the distant banks of the Oxus, on the one side, and were masters of the second metropolis of the Roman world—Alexandria—on the other, made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a camel which also carried the entire royal provision and equipage—a small tent of coarse hair, a bag of corn, a bag of dates, a wooden bowl, and a leathern flask of water. Gibbon offers the following account of the simplicity, devoutness, equity, and righteousness of the conqueror of Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt:

> Wherever he halted, the company without distinction was invited to partake of his homely fare, and the repast was consecrated by the prayer and exhortation of the Commander of the Faithful. But in expedition or pilgrimage, his power was exercised in the administration of justice; he reformed the licentious polygamy of the Arabs; relieved the tributaries from extortion and cruelty; and chastized the luxury of the Saracens by despoiling them of their rich silk, and dragging them on their face in dirt.[2]

Khaled, whom the Prophet called the 'Sword of God', whose almost legendary valour had united Arabia, Mesopotamia, and Syria under the banner of Islam, died in the possession only of his horse, his arms, and a single slave. The great hero is credited to have declared in his youth, 'it is not the delicacies of Syria, or the fading delights of this world, that have prompted me to devote my life in the cause of religion; I only seek the favour of God, and his apostle.'[3]

The valiant conqueror of Egypt, Omrou, was distinguished by poetic genius in addition to martial valour. The following remarkable passage occurs in his report to Khalif Omar: 'The crowds of husbandmen who blacken the land may be compared to a swarm of industrious ants; and their native indolence is quickened by the lash of the taskmaster. But the riches they extract are unequally shared between those who labour and those who possess.' That was a view far in advance of time. The idea of social equity was unknown in all the lands of ancient civilization. The toilers, either as slaves or as *sudras*, were objects of contempt and exploitation. They were hardly considered as human beings. The economic principle, primitively formulated in the memorable injunction of the first Khalif, evolved out of the interest of the Arab traders, revolutionized the old social idea. A part of the wealth produced by the toiling masses, when left with themselves, becomes a powerful impetus to trade. In his administration of the conquered kingdom of the Pharaohs and the Ptolemies, the Arab warrior sought with success to mend the glaring inequities that had offended his poetic vision. Egypt, robbed and despoiled for centuries by the Greeks and the Romans, prospered under the Saracens.

There is no end of testimonies to prove that even in the predominantly martial period of their history, the Saracens were far from being barbaric bands of fanatical marauders, spreading pillage and rapine, death and destruction in the name of religion. Then, the period of conquest was short, as compared to the long era of learning and culture that flourished subsequently under the patronage of the Khalifs as well as of the tributary and independent Empire. The military period terminated with the establishment of the Abbassids at Baghdad—the 'City of Peace'—just about a hundred years after the ascendancy of the Prophet at Medina. Since then, the military activities of the Arabs were essentially of the nature of current defensive and offensive operations of a far-flung Empire.

The stern enthusiasm of the Saracen warriors was softened by time and prosperity. They began to seek riches no longer in war, but in trade and industry; fame, not on the field of battle, but in the pursuit of science and literature; and happiness, no longer in the fanatical worship of one God and his only Prophet, but in the harmless enjoyment of social and domestic life. War was no longer the passion and proud profession of the Saracens, because they had found interest and delight in a peaceful world created by the prowess of their forefathers. The progeny of the intrepid heroes, who had flocked to the belligerent standard of Abu Bakr and Omar, with the hope of paradise and incidentally earthly spoils, found the modest occupation of trade and industry more profitable, and science and philosophy more gratifying.

Three hundred years of peace, prosperity, and progress elapsed before the martial valour of the Saracens was rekindled by Christian aggression in the deceptive form of the crusades. Pillage and plunder, tyranny and oppression came to be associated with Muslim conquests only after the power of the Saracens had been overwhelmed by the Mongol barbarians from Central Asia; Arab learning and culture had been corrupted by the degenerating luxury of the court; and the proud standard of Islam, having lost its original revolutionary lustre, had been prostituted in the rapacious hands of the Turks and the Tartars.

It is a gross misreading of history to confound Islam with militarism. Mohammad was the Prophet not of the Saracen warriors, but of the Arab merchants. The very name with which he baptised his creed contradicts the current notion about its aim. Etymologically, Islam means to make peace, or the making of peace: to make peace with God by doing homage to his Oneness, repudiating the fraudulent divinity of idols which had usurped his sole claim to the devotion of man; and to make peace on earth through the union of the Arabian tribes. Peace on earth was of immediate importance, and greater consequence. The temporal interest of the Arabian merchants required it; for, trade thrives better under peaceful conditions. Since decayed states and degenerated religions bred the germs of continued wars and perennial revolts, their destruction was a condition for peace. The creed of Mohammad made peace at home, and the martial volour of the Saracens conferred the same blessing on the peoples inhabiting the vast territories from Samarkand to Spain.

As soon as a country came under the domination of the Arabs, its economic life was quickened by the encouragement of industry and agriculture. The spirit and interest of the Arab traders determined and directed the policy of the Islamic State. In the Roman world as well as in all the other lands of antique civilization, the ruling classes detested all productive labour, looked down upon trade and industry. War and worship were their noble professions. With the Arabs it was different. Nomadic life in a desert had taught them to appreciate labour as the source of freedom. With them trade was an honourable as well as a lucrative occupation of the free man. Thus, the Islamic State was based upon social relations entirely different from those of the old. Religion extolled industry, and encouraged a normal indulgence of nature. Trade was free, and as noble a profession as statecraft, war, letters, and science. The Khalifs of Baghdad were not only great traders; the earlier ones learned, and actually practised some craft to purchase their personal necessities with the proceeds of manual labour. Most of the great Arab philosophers and scholars came from opulent trading families. The culture and refinement of the courts of Bokhara and Samarkand, the munificence of the Fatimide rulers of Africa, and the splendour of the Sultans of Andalusia were equally produced rather by the profits of prosperous trade than by taxes extorted by despotic measures.

Under certain conditions, trade is a potent instrument of spiritual revolution. The aspiration of the Arab merchant produced the monotheism of Mohammad. This, in its turn, inspired the nomads of a desert to establish one of the vastest and most flourishing empires of history. The laws of the Koran revolutionized social relations. Increased production, the result of this revolution, quickened trade which ushered in an era of cosmopolitanism and spiritual uplift. Trade broadens the vision of man. Visiting distant lands, getting used to the sight of strange customs, mixing with peoples of diverse races, the trader frees himself from the prejudices and limitations born of the local conditions of his native land. He develops the capacities of toleration, sympathy, and understanding for the habits, views and faiths of others. Observation and inquisitiveness, which guide his voyage on the unknown sea, or direct his steps in strange lands, kill in him the comfort of credulity. The growth of critical faculty places him at the gate of knowledge. The essence of his occupation teaches the trader to think in abstraction. He is not interested in his merchandise as such. His mind is occupied with the idea of profit. It is all the same to him whether his camels or ships are laden with wool or corn or spices. He is concerned with something which is neither these nor other concrete things he handles. These are simply the means to attain his end—to make profit, which is a category abstracted from the concrete commodity he buys or sells. He appreciates things, not in their intrinsic value, but according to their capacity to produce profit.

Toleration for strange things, the attempt to understand them, freedom from prejudice, faculty of observation, ability to think in abstract—all these qualities acquired by the trader, thanks to the nature of his occupation, go into the making of a philosophical outlook. Having seen different peoples cherish diverse forms of superstitions as divine wisdom, practise equally absurd rites and rituals for expressing devotion, extol prejudices to the dignity of eternal truth, the cosmopolitan mind of the travelled trader indulgently smiles upon the credulity of all, deplores their depravity equally, and respects the common element of faith beneath the superficial diversities of theological dogmas and forms of worship.

The main arteries of international trade of the mediaeval world ran through the countries which embraced Islam and were united in the Saracen Empire. The northern routes of trade with China, which passed through Constantinople to Italy and other countries of Western Europe, had become extremely risky owing to the Scythian inroads and the ruinous fiscal policy of the Byzantine Empire. After their conquest of Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia, and the territories across the Oxus, the Araba captured the Chinese trade and diverted it to pass through their domain of North Africa and Spain, ultimately to reach the markets of Western Europe. During the eighth to the eleventh centuries, practically the entire trade between India and China, on the one hand, and Europe, on the other, was done by the Arabs. Thousands of traders travelled with their caravans, loaded with precious cargoes, from the remote frontiers of China and India all the way to Morocco and Spain. They were not persecuted or detested as their kind had been in all the countries of antique civilization, with the honourable exception of Greece. In the Empire of the Saracens, they belonged to the ruling class. Consequently, the learning and culture that thrived so luxuriantly owing to the prosperity of the Saracen Empire bore the stamp of their native broad-mindedness, cosmopolitanism, and incredulity. Under the leadership of a martial aristocracy and jealous priesthood, human ideology takes the form of dogmatic faith or misty mysticism. Philosophy—the search for a rational explanation of the Universe—originates in a society ruled by an aristocracy engaged in trade. The city states of the Ionian Greeks were therefore the birthplace of philosophy.

Islam was a necessary product of history—an instrument of human progress. It rose as the ideology of a new social relationship which, in its turn, revolutionized the mind of man. But just as it had subverted and replaced older cultures, decayed in course of time, Islam, in its turn, was also overstepped by further social developments, and consequently had to hand over its spiritual leadership to other agencies born out of newer conditions. But it contributed to the forging of new ideological instruments which brought about the subsequent social revolution. The instruments were experimental science and rationalist philosophy. It stands to the credit of Islamic culture to have been instrumental in the promotion of the ideology of a new social revolution.

Capitalist mode of production rescued Europe from the chaos of mediaeval barbarism. It fought, and in the long run vanquished Christian theology and the spiritual monopoly of the Catholic Church, with the potent weapon of rationalist philosophy. This weapon, invented by the ancient sages of Greece, came to the possession of the founders of modern civilization through the Arab scholars who had not only preserved the precious patrimony, but added to it handsomely. The historic battle, begun by the nomads of the Arabian desert under the religious flag of Islam, was fought step by step through a thousand years on fields scattered over the three continents, to be won finally in Europe under the profane standard of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and Bourgeois Revolution.

Notes

[1] Okley, *History of the Saracens.*

[2] E. Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

[3] Recorded by the historian Abul Feda.

III Social and Historical Background of Islam

Islam—the Religion of Peace—was not the creation of Mohammad any more than other religions were of those to whom their origins are respectively attributed. No religion is the creation of any single individual, nor does it appear all of a sudden, revealed to this or that seer as it is always claimed. Islam, like any other religion, was the product of the conditions of the time, and of the surroundings in which it flourished.

Though living on the side of the fateful road on which the conquering armies of the Assyrians, Persians, Macedonians, and Romans had marched back and forth, the inhabitants of the vast Arabian Peninsula maintained their freedom by virtue of the natural aspects of their country and the mode of life moulded by these aspects. But the fierce love of freedom, together with the exigencies of nomadic existence, had split the inhabitants of the Arabian desert into a number of tribes perpetually engaged in feuds and warfare.... [Besides sheep-raising and horse-breeding, their two lucrative professions were robbery and trade. ...]

The wars conducted by the Arabs before the appearance of the Prophet were mostly internecine feuds fought with savage fierceness, but strictly according to the quaint codes of honour, chivalry, and nobility. The profuse spilling of blood did not fertilize the sands of Arabia, but it did, eventually, become prejudicial to the profitable economic consequences of robbery, the legitimate profession of trade conducted by the primitive Arabs. Economic necessity demanded termination of the proud but ruinous virtue of internecine wars, and diversion of the traditional Saracen valour in more profitable channels. The ideas, born out of that necessity, eventually crystallized into the 'Religion of Mohammad'.

Itself a vast stretch of sandy wilderness, Arabia, however, is surrounded on three sides by populous countries—homes of ancient civilizations, where industry and agriculture thrived from time immemorial. On the south is the ocean on which navigated vessels carrying the trade of India. Thanks to her geographical position, Arabia was intersected by the routes of caravan trade and maritime commerce, interchanged among India, Persia, Assyria, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Abyssinia. In earlier days, the trade-routes connecting Africa and Asia lay through the south and north of the Peninsula, avoiding the unknown interior of the sandy wilderness. But the exorbitant taxation of Byzantine despotism, supplemented by the endless extortion of its local officials, drove the traders to hazard the encounter of the fierce but hospitable Beduin in the heart of his home.

In the beginning, the Arab collected his tribute according to his peculiar code of law and morality. But in course of time, he discovered that trade would be more profitable than robbery. Of all the Arabian tribes, the Koreish were the first to exchange the turbulent for a peaceful but more profitable profession. They inhabited the coastline of the Red Sea and commanded the Abyssinian trade long before the Asiatic traffic also came their way. In the earlier centuries of the Christian era, the capital of the Koreish tribe, Mecca, had become the point where the important trade routes from south to north and east to west intersected. At Yemen, on the Arabian Sea, the Koreish caravans took over the commodities from India; at a point near modern Aden, their precious burden was increased by the African riches from Abyssinia. The journey northwards terminated at the busy marts of Damascus, where corn and manufactured articles were bought with the exchange of aromatics, pearls, precious stones, tusks, etc. The lucrative exchange diffused plenty of riches in the streets of Mecca. When, later, the east–west trade route also passed through Mecca, the prosperity of the Koreish became unbounded, and their ambition proportionately grew.

But other Arabian tribes, jealous of their freedom, and envious of the prosperity of the Koreish, stood faithfully by their traditional codes of law and morality, whose profane origin was no longer admitted. They were raised to the nobility of offensive and defensive warfare, on the authority of tribal gods. The old national pastime of robbery, which had previously been played at the expense of unwary strangers, turned out to be ruinous to the new national occupation of trade. Termination of the tribal feuds became an essential condition for further political progress. The task of establishing unity, by the logic of historical events, devolved upon those who controlled the economic forces making for the historically necessary goal. The Koreish appeared as the chosen people of history.

In the midst of their ceaseless feuds, all the Arabian tribes worshipped and sacrificed at the temple of Kaaba near Mecca. The Koreish had seized the control of the seat of national worship, and the sacerdotal office of great power and extensive privilege had been captured by the Hashemites—the most important family of the tribe. The Hashemites, therefore, commanded national respect and veneration, in addition to the opulence derived from trade. Eventually, a scion of the Hashemite family issued the call for unity, in the form of a new religion which denied all gods but one.

The severe monotheism of Mohammad not only echoed the yearning for unity on the part of a people torn asunder by internecine feuds; it was also destined to find a ready response from the neighboring nations, tormented by the intolerance of the Catholic Church. The religious life of the people of Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt had been hopelessly confused by the conflicts of Magian mysticism, Jewish conservatism, and Christian bigotry. Rigid rites and rituals had taken the place of religion; hypocritical ceremonies had driven away devotion; dogmatic theology had persecuted faith; and God had disappeared in a confusing crowd of angels, saints, and apostles. The stringent cry of the new religion—'There is but One God'—softened by great toleration, subject to this fundamental creed, was enthusiastically hailed by the distressed multitudes searching for the secure anchor of a simple faith in the stormy sea of social disintegration, intellectual bankruptcy, and spiritual chaos. The historic cry was raised by the caravan traders of Arabia who had stood outside the ruinous conflict of arms and beliefs, had prospered economically, and progressed in spirit, while their older and more civilized neighbours had stagnated, decayed, and disintegrated. The propagation of the stern belief in the Oneness of God prepared the ground for the rise of a military State which unified all the social functions—religious, civil, judicial, and administrative. The unitarianism of the Saracens laid the foundation of a new social order which rose magnificently out of the ruins of the antique civilization. Such a creed was sure to attract the attention of the multitudes barbarously persecuted for religious heterodoxy. The new faith allowed freedom of conscience to all who placed themselves under its protection. Islam rose as a protection against religious persecution and refuge for the oppressed. . . . The spirit of Islam was not invented by the genius of Mohammad; nor was it revealed to him. It was a heritage of history conferred on the Arabian nation. The greatness of Mohammad was his ability to recognize the value of the heritage and make his countrymen conscious of it. . . .

The particularist freedom and internecine feuds of the Arabian tribes were mutually compromised and composed at Mecca. All routes of trade led there. The unity of the economic interest of the decentralized nation had created at Mecca a symbol of precarious spiritual unity. All the tribes from distant parts of the vast desert, while visiting the market of Mecca, worshipped in the temple of Kaaba. Each had introduced there its own emblem of devotion. The temple had been adorned with no less than three hundred and sixty idols of men, eagles, lions, etc. But the prosperous tribe of Koreish dominated the trade of Mecca, and the powerful family of Hashim had seized control of the temple. It was natural that the new spirit of a rising faith, which would further economic interest through national unity, should be first felt consciously at the heart of the nation. So, it happened that a member of the Hashemite family began to preach the new religion.

Once the family of Hashim and the tribe of Koreish were converted to the new faith, the whole nation would follow soon. All the tribes must visit Mecca for the purposes of trade. Those who controlled the trade of Mecca could easily dictate the faith and conscience of the entire nation. But prejudice and habit induced the Koreish to persecute the innovating zeal of their kinsmen. They were afraid that trade would be driven away from Mecca, should the Pantheon of Kaaba be disturbed. But there were others ready to assume the leadership of the revolution, when the most eligible candidate failed. Medina espoused the cause of the Prophet, and the call of unity found enthusiastic response in other quarters. The supremacy of Mecca was menaced. One family after another defected from the Koreish conservatism, and joined the revolutionary Hashemites. Before long the Koreish capitulated before their exiled kinsmen, but only to capture the sceptre of the 'Commander of the Faithful'.

As soon as the followers of the Prophet captured Mecca, a perpetual law was passed that no unbeliever should be allowed to set foot on the territory of the Holy City. The new religion was imposed upon the entire nation with the potent weapon of economic boycott. Kaaba was cleared of its idols and became the shrine of 'Mohammad's God'. Once the standard of the new religion was raised, the whole nation flocked under it. The ground had been prepared. The faith had unconsciously taken hold of the mind of the nation before it was preached. Economic interest demanded its establishment.

IV The Causes of Triumph

Its historical background and the social conditions in which it was born put on Islam the stamp of toleration, which, to the undiscerning eye, may appear to be incongruous with the spirit of fanaticism traditionally associated with it. But there is no contradiction. The basic doctrine of Islam—'There is but One God'—itself makes for toleration. If the whole world, with its defects and deformities, the entire mankind, with all its follies and frivolities, is admitted as the creation of the selfsame God, the believer in this elevating doctrine may deplore the deformities and laugh at what appears to him to be absurdities and perverseness; but the very nature of his faith does not permit him to look upon them as the works or worshippers of some other God of Evil, and declare war upon them as such. Those who worship differently are for him mistaken and misled brethren, but nonetheless children of the selfsame Father, to be brought to the right road, or indulgently tolerated until they are ready for redemption.

The terrifying vision of the followers of the Arabic Prophet offering to the world the Koran or the sword, cast such an ominous shadow over the history of the rise of Islam, as concealed the third alternative so freely offered, and generally accepted. That was the main cause for the triumph of Islam. As a matter of fact, the alternatives were very differently offered. It was: 'Accept the Koran or pay tribute to the Saracen conqueror.' The 'Sword of God' was unsheathed only when neither of the alternatives was accepted. The economic interest of the Arab trader, which produced the monotheistic creed of Islam, was antagonistic to indiscriminate bloodshed. The lands through which the trade-routes lay must be conquered and brought under the domination of the unitary State. The object would be all the better realized, should the conquered peoples accept the new religion; for, then the unitarian State would be established on a solid foundation. But production and consumption of commodities are the essential factors of trade. Therefore, it was not compatible with the historic role of Islam to massacre the artisan and peasant masses, or to destroy opulent cities for the impiety of rejecting the Koran. What was necessary was their subjugation to the believers of the new creed. Under the domination of the followers of the Prophet, unbelieving peoples were allowed to hold their imperfect faiths and to continue their perverse worships.

When Jerusalem capitulated to Khalif Omar, the inhabitants of the Vanquished city were left in possession of their worldly goods, and allowed the freedom of worship. A special quarter of the city was allotted for the residence of the Christian population with their Patriarch and his clergy. For the protection thus granted, a nominal tax of two pieces of gold was imposed upon the entire Christian community. . . .

The critical Gibbon conclusively proves that 'to his Christian subjects, Mohammad readily granted security of their persons, the freedom of their trade, the property of their goods and the toleration of their worship'.[1] This profitable principle of toleration was observed with more or less strictness not only by all the immediate successors of the Prophet, but over the whole of Arabic ascendency. It was abandoned only after Islam had played out its historic role, and its leadership had passed from the noble Saracens to the notorious barbarians of Tartary.

In its days of glory, the native toleration of Islam not only developed into wide freedom of thought and rationalism, but, from the orthodox point of view, even degenerated into positively heretical irreligious notions. Most of the earlier Abbassid Khalifs of Bagdad were not only devoted to the study of profane science, and free in their thought; some of them, Mostassim for example, even did not believe in the divine origin of the Koran.

For centuries the Saracen Empire offered hospitable asylum to the persecuted Jews as well as to the unorthodox Christian sects of the Nestorians, Jacobites, Eutychians, and Paulicians. After the consolidation of the Saracen conquest, the toleration of Islam was extended even to the Catholic Church. Many Christian historians themselves bear testimony to this effect. The Ecclesiastical historian Renaudot, for example, informs that

> the rank, the immunities, and the domestic jurisdiction of Patriarchs, Bishops, and the clergy were protected by the [Muslim] civil magistrates [of Egypt]; the learning of Christian individuals recommended them to the employment of secretaries and physicians; they were enriched by the lucrative collection of revenue; and their merit was sometimes raised to the command of cities and provinces.

A Khalif of Bagdad declared that the Christians were most worthy of trust in the administration of Persia. . . .

The north of Africa, from Alexandria to Carthage, was the only territory where the Christian faith was totally obliterated by the spread of Islam. There again, the cause of the sweeping religious revolution was not the intolerance of the new creed, but the decay of the old faith, and the general chaos and despair caused by that decay. The faith of the gospel of Jesus, established by the talent, piety, and power of Cyprian, Athanasius, and Augustine, had been subverted by Arian and Donatist heresies, and the Catholic fury, with which the impoverished masses revolting under the banner of religious heresy were suppressed, had ruined the once prosperous provinces economically. Then, the Vandal and Moorish invaders had devastated the ruins so mercilessly as to throw the people into a hopeless state of social chaos and spiritual morbidity which drove them to seek an elusive solace in the absurdities of Monasticism.

In that dense darkness of social dissolution and spiritual despair, the virile and optimistic message of the Prophet of Arabia flashed like an illuminating flame of hope. The mind of the multitude was lured by the temporal as well as the heavenly blessings offered by the new religion. The conquering trumpet of Islam awakened the despondent spirits who, defeated in the struggle of terrestrial life, had precariously entrenched themselves in the superstition of a divine existence. Healthy indulgence of nature, allowed, even encouraged, by the new faith, speedily overwhelmed the perverse notions of asceticism fomented by a degenerate version of the gospel of Christ. Islam opened up a new vision of hope before a people sunk in the depth of despondency. The convulsion created by it ushered in a new society in which every one had the opportunity of ascending to the natural level of his courage and capacity. With the exhilarating inspiration of Islam, and under the benevolent rule of the Saracen conquerors, the fertile soil and industrious peoples of North Africa soon recovered their prosperity.

> It is altogether a misconception that the Arabian progress was due to the sword alone. The sword may change an acknowledged national creed, but it cannot affect the consciences of men. Profound though its argument is, something far more profound was demanded before Mohammedanism pervaded the domestic life of Asia and Africa . . . The explanation of this political phenomenon is to be found in the social condition of the conquered countries. The influences of religion in them had long ago ceased; it had become supplanted by theology. . . . How was it possible that unlettered men, who with difficulty can be made to apprehend obvious things, should understand such mysteries? Yet, they were taught that on those doctrines the salvation or damnation of the human race depended. They saw . . . that personal virtue or vice were no longer considered; that sin was not measured by evil works but by the degrees of heresy. . . . What an example when bishops were concerned in assassinations, poisonings, adulteries, blindings, riots, treasons, civil war; when Patriarchs and Primates were excommunicating and anathematizing one another in their rivalries for earthly power, bribing eunuchs with gold, and courtesans and royal females with concessions of episcopal love, and influencing the decisions of councils asserted to speak with the voice of God by those base intrigues and sharp practices resorted to by demagogues in their packed assemblies! Among legions of monks, who carried terror into the imperial armies and riot into the great cities, arose hideous clamours for theological dogmas, but never a voice for intellectual liberty or the outraged rights of man. In such a state of things, what else could be the result than disgust or indifference? Certainly men could not be expected . . . to give help to a system that had lost all hold on their hearts.
>
> When, therefore, in the midst of the wrangling of sects . . . and anarchy of countless disputants, there sounded through the world . . . the dread

> battlecry. 'There is but One God', . . . is it surprising that all Asia and Africa fell away? In better times, patriotism is too often made subordinate to religion; in those times, it was altogether dead.[2]

The principle of equality, preached by the followers of Mohammad, originated in the traditional freedom of the nomadic life of the Arabic tribes. They had all shown equal valour in the national profession of robbery. When that modest call of the olden times assumed the majestic proportion of conquest, the individual Arab did not forget that his horse could speed as fast and his scimitar was as sharp as those of any. He had taken an equal share in defending his desert home against the conquering armies of Sesostris and Cyrus, Alexander and Darius, Pompei and Ashirwan, Ptolemy and Trajan. He would not play a less noble part in the pastime of turning the table. But the principle of equality proclaimed by Islam proved to be a factor in its spectacular triumph no less potent than the scimitar of the Saracen hero. It contrasted sharply with the oppressive laws governing the class-and caste-ridden societies of the Roman, Byzantine, Persian and, later, the Indian Empires. Islam stood for freedom and equality which, as a matter of fact, had long been forgotten in all the lands of the degenerated ancient civilizations.

The proud possession of the spiritual heritage of earlier civilizations having accrued to the Arabs, it became their mission to share it with the unfortunate multitudes groaning under the hideous ruins of those civilizations. The circumstances of the age were favourable to the dramatic expansion of Islam. It rose in the period of intellectual and spiritual decline of the ruling classes throughout the world of ancient civilizations. The dissatisfaction with the social conditions of decay, decomposition, and despotism had created in the masses of people the aspiration and striving for a better world. Christianity had been the first child born of that revolutionary spirit. The unfortunate triumph of having enlisted the corrupting patronage of the old ruling class had transformed Christianity into an apologist of the established order of society. The Church fathers had conveniently forgotten that their Prophet had preached revolt against the Roman yoke, and had painted his as the meek sheep bleating the shameful injunction: 'Pay the Caesar his due'—an injunction which violated the whole tradition of Jewish history constituting the background of Christianity. Having compromised with the ruling class, Christianity could not but betray the mission of laying the foundation of new social order commensurate with the objective striving of the age. It had refused to lead the destitute to the conquest of this world and had deceived them with the delusion of a world to come, flowing with milk and honey. The entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven was to be allowed only to the meek, that is, to those who would submit to the tyranny of the rulers of this world.

The debacle of Christianity made the appearance of a more vigorous religion a historical necessity. Islam not only promised its votaries the blessings of a brilliant paradise. It also inspired them to the conquest of this world. Indeed, the Paradise of the Arabian Prophet was nothing but an ideal of the life of happiness and enjoyment to be attained in this world. Mohammad not only provided his own people with a platform of national unity, but armed the united Arabian nation with the cry of revolt which found ready response from the oppressed and destitute masses in all the adjacent countries.

The cause of the dramatic success of Islam was spiritual as well as social and political. On this important point, Gibbon testifies: 'More pure than the system of Zoroaster, more liberal than the laws of Moses, the religion of Mohmmad might seem less inconsistent with reason than the creed of mystery and superstition which, in the seventh century, disgraced the simplicity of the Gospel.'[3]

Another historian bears testimony to the fact that the spectacular triumph of Islam was rather due to its liberating and egalitarian principles than to the military valour of its early adherents.

> In almost every case in which the Saracens conquered a Christian nation, history unfortunately reveals that they owed their success chiefly to the favour with which this progress was regarded by the masses of the conquered people. To the disgrace of most Christian governments, it will be found that their administration was more oppressive than that of the Arab conquerors . . . The inhabitants of Syria welcomed the followers of Mahomet; the Copts of Egypt contributed to place their country under the domination of the Arabs; and the Christian Berbers aided the conquest of Africa. All these nations were induced, by the hatred for the government of Constantinople, to place themselves under the sway of the Mohammedans. The treachery of the nobles and the indifference of the people made Spain and the South of France easy prey to the Saracens.[4]

Notes

[1] E. Gibbon, op. cit.
[2] J. W. Draper, *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, Vol. I, pp. 332–3.
[3] E. Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.
[4] G. Finlay, *History of the Byzantine Empire*.

V Mohammad and His Teachings

The founder of Islam has been characterized as 'the man who, of all men, has exercised the greatest influence upon the human race'.[1] There was, however, nothing very extraordinary about the man until he claimed the credit of divine revelation. The foundation of that dubious claim was no more or no less fictitious than in the case of the prophets, apostles, and saints of all other religions. Christian arrogance called the Arabian Prophet an 'Impostor'. But it has been forgotten that he was given that name together with Moses and Jesus. The authorship of the famous book, anonymously published—'Three Impostors'—which created sensation in Europe towards the close of the middle-ages, was attributed to the Christian King Frederic Barbarossa as well as to the Muslim philosopher Averroes.

If Mohammad was an 'impostor', he did not take up that role any more consciously than others who appeared as instruments through which the fiction of divine revelation became a reality and carried conviction with the ignorant and superstitious masses. Having conceived the ideal of national unity, Mohammad realised that it could not be made acceptable to the warring Arabian tribes unless it were backed up with a supernatural sanction. People enjoying the bliss of ignorance and thinking in terms of preconceived notions, could not be convinced with any other argument. The will of minor gods could be overwhelmed by the will of a greater and all-powerful God. The protection against the wrath of the former could be found in the mercy of the latter. The belief in the absolute sway of one supreme God can alone encourage people to revolt against the tyranny of a whole host of tribal deities. If the supreme God was not there he had to be invented. That was the chain of Mohammad's thoughts. There was no imposture in it. Did not the rationalist Voltaire put forward the same argument more than a thousand years after it had found favour with the Arabian Prophet. But in the latter case, the argument was put forward in defence of reaction; Voltaire advocated the necessity of inventing a God because that would be the only guarantee for the preservation of the decayed system of feudal monarchistic society. At the time of Mohammad, and under the circumstances it was advanced, the argument served a positively revolutionary purpose. When man's mind is dominated by the belief in the supernatural, every progressive idea should be formulated in the terms of those beliefs if it were to secure popular support. Besides, the idea of One God was not the invention of Mohammad. The idea had grown out of the social conditions described in the last chapter. Mohmmad's mission was to discover evidence for the existence of One God. And if you wish to convince people you must adduce only that kind of evidence which can carry conviction to them.

But Mohammad's search for God was not inspired by cynicism, as in the case of Voltaire. It was an honest effort on the part of an ignorant man inspired by a zeal. In quest of the God who alone could save the Arabian nation, he retired to the desert and gave himself up to meditation, fasting, and prayer—those familiar practices adopted by the prejudiced seeking divine inspiration even in these days of the twentieth century. And the result was as usual in all such cases. 'He was visited by supernatural appearances, mysterious voices accosted him as the Prophet of God; even the stones and trees joined in the whispering.'[2] Such experiences always result from cerebral disorder which takes place whenever the prescribed practices are carried too far. Fixed ideas, however fantastic or imaginary, may appear to take concrete form if the mind is focused on them so as to exclude the consciousness of other sensations. A scientific study of the psychology of seers reveals the fact that 'inspiration' or any other 'religious experience' is the result of a pathological state brought about either accidentally or purposely through prescribed practices.

Mohammad acted as all those of his kind had done before him, or did after him. But in his case, there was a fact which must go to his credit. He was too shrewd a man to be deluded by those psycho–pathological symptoms which are taken for the evidence of spiritual elevation. He was afraid that he was going mad; and might have abandoned his mission if his sagacious wife had not come to his aid in the nick of time. It was the rich merchant Khadija, mature with worldly wisdom, who was quick to appreciate the spiritual value of the mental aberrations of her husband. She persuaded him that his visions were not signs of insanity but were messengers of God. Taking advantage of his psycho–pathological state of suggestibility, she could easily make him 'see' an angel entering the room to deliver to him the Message of God. Undoubtedly, the drama could be enacted only in the setting of ignorance, superstition, and prejudice, main characters being played under delusion. But that is how all religions are born. There is no reason to think that Islam was an exception. It was an exception in the sense that, except for the intention of a divine sanction, it contained less of religious dogmas and metaphysical speculation than sound political sense, progressive social principles, and admirable codes of personal behaviour.

> He did not engage in vain metaphysics, but applied himself to improving the social condition of his people by regulation respecting personal cleanliness, sobriety, fasting, prayer. Above all other works he esteemed alms-giving and

> charity. With a liberality to which the world had of late become a stranger, he admitted the salvation of men of any form of faith provided they were virtuous.[3]

The Koran was not the work of an intellectual, and hence contains some crude ideas and phantastic speculations. These obvious defects of the Koran easily overshadow its great merit even as the source of inspiration of a great religion. But Mohammad's religion was rigorously monotheistic; and as monotheism it was uncompromising, which outstanding characteristic won for it the distinction of the highest form of religion. The God stands out in all his glory. The ability to create not only the whole world but an endless series of worlds is the token of his all-powerfulness. To have thus established the idea of God, albeit in a dogmatic and primitive manner, was the credit of Mohammad. . . .

Monotheism, however, is a highly subversive theory. While being itself the highest form of religion, it strikes at the root of the religious mode of thought. Placing god above and beyond the world, it opens up the possibility of doing without him altogether. Islam, as the most rigorous monotheistic religion, closed the chapter of human history dominated by the religious mode of thought, and by its very nature was open to unorthodox interpretations which eventually liquidated the religious mode of thought and laid the foundation of modern rationalism.

> We may compare the working of Monotheism to a mighty lake, which gathers the floods of science together, until they suddenly begin to break through the dam. . . . The third of the great monotheistic religions, Mohammadanism, is more favourable to Materialism. This, the youngest of them, was also the first to develop, in connection with the brilliant outburst of Arabian civilization, a free philosophical spirit, which exercised a powerful influence primarily upon the Jews in the middle ages, and so indirectly upon the Christians of the West.[4]

Being the most perfected form of Monotheism, Islam played that role. The crudities of the Koran did not prevent its basic idea from flourishing into all its revolutionary consequences.

His severe Monotheism contradicted Mohammad's claim to be the sole Prophet of God. While the Koran recognized Moses, Jesus, and other Hebrew Prophets as apostles of God, Mohammad's claim, if not openly disputed in the beginning, was secretly doubted even among his associates. Divinity of its founder is not the fundamental creed of Islam. And that distinction results from its strict Monotheism. Immediately upon the death of Mohammad, his followers were divided on that crucial question. When the news of the Prophet's death reached the camp of the army setting out for the conquest of Syria, the devout Omar refused to believe that the Prophet could die, and threatened to strike off the head of the messenger whom he suspected to be an infidel. Upon that the venerable Abu Bakr admonished the impetuous younger man with the following words: 'Is it Mohammad or the God of Mohammad that you worship? The God of Mohammad liveth for ever; but the apostle was a mortal like ourselves, and according to his own prediction, he has experienced the common fate of mortality.'

It should be noted that the immediate successor of Mohammad, at the moment of his disappearance, called him an *apostle*, instead of the Prophet. With the less ambitious designation of an apostle, Mohammad was placed by his followers on the level of other religious teachers and lawgivers. Denial of the divinity of the Prophet made Islam the purest doctrine of Monotheism. Once divinity is conceded to a Prophet, before long he assumes the attributes supposed to belong only to the Supreme Being. The unity of God or the absoluteness of the First Principle can no longer be maintained logically. Dubious theological devices endeavour to reconcile the contradiction. The original simplicity of faith is lost either in theological dogmatism or mystical self-deception. Without the severity of its theology, Islam could not claim the historic role as creditably as it did. When the Prophet is deprived of divinity, or his claim to it is not generally admitted, the scripture cannot command absolute and infallible authority. Consequently, some latitude is left for the mind of the faithful. The teaching of a mortal cannot have the majesty of eternal truth, and scriptural laws cannot claim immutability.

Until the twelfth century, Islam did not possess a homogeneous body of dogmas. Subject to the belief in one God, the Mussalman had a practically unlimited latitude for his spiritual life. And history shows that the Arabian thinkers made free and full use of that flexibility of the new faith. In order to refute the Christian doctrine of Trinity, which they considered to be a vulgarization of the sublime idea of the Supreme God, Muslim theologists developed the fundamental idea of religion to the most abstract form ever conceived by human mind.[5] They could perform that unparalleled feat of theological ratiocination because 'the Monotheism of Mohammad was the most absolute, and comparatively the freest from mythical adulterations'.[6] The same authority testifies to the fact that the fundamental principles of religion laid down crudely by the founder of Islam were pregnant with the possibility of great development. And because of their rigid monotheistic nature, the development inevitably transcended the narrow limits of religious thought and culminated into a spiritual efflorescence which closed the age of faith.

> Even before the communication of Greek philosophy to the Arabians, Islam had produced numerous sects and theological schools, some of which entertained so abstract a notion of God that no philosophical speculation could proceed farther in this direction, whilst others believed nothing but what

> could be understood and demonstrated; . . . In the high school at Basra, there arose, under the protection of the Abbassids, a school of rationalists which sought to reconcile religion and faith.[7]

During the first five or six hundred years of its history, Islam produced not only scholars who occupied themselves more with heavenly bodies than with heavenly beings, who quietly set aside the Koran and placed greater spiritual value on the study of profane books, revolutionary thinkers who ruthlessly sacrificed faith on the alter of reason. Not a few 'Commanders of the Faithful' themselves—those who reigned at Baghdad, Cairo or Cordova until the eleventh century—attached greater value to positive knowledge than to revealed wisdom. The independent Empire of Bokhara preferred poets to the priests, doctors of medicine to doctors of divinity, and encouraged scientific research rather than the propagation of faith.

When we bear in mind that this line of intellectual development was opened up not only by the socio-political conditions created by the triumph of Islam, but originated in the central dogma of Mohammad's religion, neither the curiosities of the Koran nor the primitiveness of the Islamic faith should permit us to underestimate the historical role of Islam.

Notes

[1] J. W. Draper, *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, Vol. I, p. 329.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] F. A. Lange, *The History of Materialism*, Vol. I, pp. 174, 177.
[5] E. Renan, *Averroes et Averroeism*, p. 76.
[6] F. A. Lange, *The History of Materialism*, Vol. I, p. 184.
[7] Ibid., p. 177.

VI Islamic Philosophy

The age of Arabian learning lasted about five hundred years, and coincided with the darkest period of European history. During the same period, India also was lying prostrate under the triumphant Brahmanical reaction which had subverted or corrupted Buddhism. Eventually, it was thanks to the inglorious success of having overcome the Buddhist revolution, that India fell such an easy prey to Muslim invaders.

Under the enlightened reign of the Abbassid, the Fatimide and the Omminade rulers, learning and culture prospered respectively in Asia, North Africa, and Spain. From Samarkand and Bokhara to Fez and Cordova, numerous scholars studied and taught astronomy, mathematics, physics, chemistry, medicine, and music. The invaluable treasure of Greek philosophy and learning had been buried under the intolerance and superstition of the Christian Church. Had it not been for the Arabs, it would have been irretrievably lost, and the dire consequence of such a mishap can be easily imagined.

Vain piety and hypocritical holiness induced the Christians to spurn the science of antiquity as profane. In consequence of that vanity of ignorance, the peoples of Europe were plunged into the medieval darkness which threatened to be bottomless and interminable. The happy resurrection of the divine light of knowledge, lit by the sages of ancient Greece, at long last dissipated the depressing darkness of ignorance and superstition, prejudice and intolerance, and showed the European peoples the way to material prosperity, intellectual progress and spiritual liberation. It was through the Arabian philosophers and scientists that the rich patrimony of Greek learning reached the fathers of modern rationalism; and the pioneer of scientific research, Roger Bacon was a disciple of the Arabs. In the opinion of Humboldt, the Arabians are to be considered 'the proper founders of the physical sciences, in the signification of the term which we are now accustomed to give it'.[1] Experiment and measurement are great instruments with the aid of which they made a path for progress, and raised themselves to a position of the connecting link between the scientific achievements of the Greek and those of the modern time.

Al Kandi, Al Hassan, Al Farabi, Avicena, Al Ghazali, Abu Bakr, Avempace, Al Phetragius (the Arabian names are so contracted in historical works written in European languages)—these are names memorable in the annals of human culture; and the fame of the great Averroes has been immortalized as that of the man who made the forerunners of modern civilization acquainted with the genius of

Aristole, thereby giving an inestimable impetus to the struggle of European humanity to liberate itself from the paralysing influence of theological bigotry and sterile scholasticism. The epoch-making role of the great Arab rationalist, who flourished in the first half of the twelfth century under the enlightened patronage of the Sultan of Andalusia, is eloquently depicted by the well-known saying of Roger Bacon: 'Nature was interpreted by Averroes.'

The Khalifs not only took the exiled Greek scholars under their protection. They despatched competent men to different parts of the Roman Empire with the instruction and the means to collect all available works of the sages of ancient Greece. The precious works of Aristotle, Hipparchus, Hippocrates, Galen and other scientists were translated into the Arabian language, and the Khalifs gave every encouragement to the propagation of those irreligious teachings throughout the Muslim world. Schools established at state expense disseminated scientific knowledge to thousands of students belonging to all classes of society—'from the son of the noble to that of the mechanic'. Poor students received education free, and teachers were handsomely remunerated for their services which were held in the highest esteem. The Arab historian, Abul Faragius, records the following views of Khalif Al Manon regarding the men of learning:

> They are the elect of God, his best useful servants, whose lives are devoted to the improvement of their rational faculties. . . . The teachers of wisdom are the true luminaries and legislators of a world which without their aid would again sink into ignorance and barbarism.

The current notion of the bigotry and fanaticism of Islam loses all historical authenticity when it is known that the men of learning so highly appreciated by the successors of the Prophet, were mostly devoid of any religious fervour, not a few of them holding views frankly heretical; and the general burden of their teachings was the assertion of the reason of man as the only standard of truth. . . . Al Manon was but one of the illustrious line of Abbassid Khalifs who not only encouraged the propagation of scientific knowledge, but themselves participated in it. Nor were the enlightened Abbassids an exception.

The Fatimides of Africa and the Omminades of Spain rivalled them in political power, material prosperity, as well as in the patronage and propagation of knowledge. The library of Cairo contained over one hundred thousand volumes; whereas Cordova boasted of six times as many. This fact gives the lie to another calumny which depicts the rise of Islam as an eruption of savage fanaticism, namely, the tale of the destruction of the famous library of Alexandria. One must have a pious mind of credulous disposition to believe that those who took delight in founding and supporting such noble seats of learning, would have callously set fire to the library of Alexandria; that those who command the gratitude of mankind for having saved its most precious patrimony, could have possibly begun by contributing to the destruction of that treasure. When dispassionate and scientific study of history dissipates legends and discredits malicious tales, the rise of Islam stands out not as a scourge but a blessing for mankind.

While books written in the eleventh and twelfth centuries indignantly detail the shocking tale of the burning of the library of Alexandria, the historians Eustichius and Elmacin, both Egyptian Christians, who wrote soon after the Saracen conquest of their country, are significantly silent about the savage act. The former, a patriarch of Alexandria, could be hardly suspected of partiality to the enemies of Christianity. . . . A diligent examination of all relevant evidence enabled Gibbon to arrive at the following opinion on the matter:

> The rigid sentence of Omar is repugnant to the sound and orthodox precept of the Mohammadan Casuist; they expressly declare that the religious books of the Jews and Christians, which are acquired by the right of war, should never be committed to the flames, and that the works of profane scientists, historians or poets, physicians or philosophers, may be lawfully applied to the use of the faithful.[2]

Byzantine barbarism had undone the meritorious work of the Ptolemies. The real destruction of the Alexandrian seat of learning had been the work of St Cyril who defiled the Goddess of learning in the famous fair of Hypatia. That was already in the beginning of the fifth century. The Christian saint would not tolerate that philosophical lectures and mathematical discourses held by a young pagan woman [Hypatia] should be patronized by the élite of Alexandrian society, while the pious but incomprehensible sermons of the Archbishop were attended only by the rebels. If he was no match intellectually, he possessed the power to eliminate competition once for all. Under his instigation, the rebels, led by a regiment of monks burning with religious frenzy, attacked the seat of Alexandrian learning and, in the name of religion, perpetrated crimes too painful to be recorded and too shameful to be remembered.

> Thus, in the four hundred and fourteenth year of our era, the position of philosophy in the intellectual metropolis of the world was determined; henceforth, science must sink into obscurity and subordination. Its public existence will no longer be tolerated. Indeed, it may be said that from this period for some centuries it altogether disappeared. The leaden mace of bigotry had struck and shivered the exquisitely tempered steel of Greek philosophy. Cyril's act passed unquestioned. It was now ascertained that throughout the Roman world, there must be no more liberty of thought . . . Such assertions might answer their purposes very well so long as the victors maintained their power in Alexandria, but they manifestly are of inconvenient

> application after the Saracens had captured the city . . . For the next two dreary and weary centuries, things remained, until oppression and force were ended by foreign invaders. It was well for the world that the Arabian conquerors avowed their true argument, the scimitar, and made no pretensions to superhuman wisdom. They were thus left free to pursue knowledge without involving themselves in theological contradictions, and were able to make Egypt once more illustrious among the nations of the earth,—to snatch it from the hideous fanaticism, ignorance and barbarism into which it had been plunged.[3]

The works of the sages of ancient Greece were not only rescued, collected and preserved by the Arabs, they were profusely commented and improved upon. Complete works of Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, Apollonius, Ptolemy, Hippocrates, and Galen were available to the fathers of modern Europe at first only in Arabic versions, accompanied by erudite commentaries. Modern Europe learned from the Arabs not only medicine and mathematics. The science of astronomy, which widens the vision of man and reveals before him the mechanical laws of nature, was zealously cultivated by the Arabs. With the aid of new instruments of observation, Arab philosophers acquired exact knowledge about the circumference of the earth, the position and number of planets. In their hands, astronomy began to outgrow its primitive form (divinations of astrology), cultivated more or less by the priests of all Oriental countries, and to develop into an exact science. Although algebra had been invented by Diophantus of Alexandria, it did not become an object of common study until the age of Arabic learning. As a matter of fact, the name of the science has given currency to the theory of its Arabian origin. But the Arabs themselves modestly acknowledged their indebtedness to the Greek master. Botany was studied for medical purposes; yet the discovery of two thousand varieties of plants by Dioscorides represented the birth of a new science. Alchemy was a secret, jealously guarded by the priests of ancient Egypt. It was also practised at Babylon. In a much later period, rudiments of chemistry were also known to the physicians of India. But the science of chemistry owes its origin and initial developments to the industry of the Arabs.

> They first invented and named the alembic for the purposes of distillation; analysed the substances of the three kingdoms of nature; tried the distinction and affinities of alkalis and acids; and converted the precious minerals into soft and salutary medicine.[4]

It was in the science of medicine that the Arabs made the greatest progress. Masua and Gebir were worthy disciples of Galen, and substantially added to what they had learned from the great master. Avicena, born in distant Bokhara, in the tenth century, reigned in Europe as the undisputed authority of the medical science for five hundred years. The school of Salermo, until the sixteenth century, was the centre of medical learning in Europe. It owed its origin to the Saracens and taught the lessons of Avicena.

The distinctive merit of the Arab scholars was the zeal to acquire knowledge through observation. They discarded the vanity of airy speculation, and stood firmly on the ground known to them. That great merit of Arabian learning is decisively evidenced in the following view of its doyen, Averroes:

> The religion peculiar to philosophers is the study of that which is; for no sublimer worship can be given to God than the knowledge of his works, which leads to the knowledge of him and his reality. That is the noblest action in his eyes; the vilest is taxing, as error and vain presumption, the efforts of those who practise this worship, and who in this religion have the purest of religions. . . .

In this passage, Averroes stated the basic principle of the inductive method—the surest way to true knowledge. If the preconceived notion of a creator is set aside, and if man is made to *know* him (as distinct from the blind faith in his existence) in his reality through the empirical knowledge of his works, that is, nature, the divine object recedes farther and farther, until it vanishes into nothingness—the only demonstrable reality about his existence; and a religion which promoted that singular quest for the knowledge of God certainly represented the greatest advance of human ideology under the garb of religion.

The centre of Islam and Arabic learning was in those very historical regions where the older civilizations of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Jews, Persians, and Greeks had arisen, clashed, and fallen. The positive outcome of those earlier civilizations went into the making of the Arabian culture, and the remarkable monotheism of Mohammad made its own the cardinal principles of the religion of those ancient peoples. It stands to the credit of the Arabian philosophers that they, for the first time, conceived the sublime idea of a common origin of all religions. Not only did they hold the view, singularly broad for the epoch, that all religions were so many efforts of the human mind to solve the great mysteries of life and nature; they went so much farther as to make the bold suggestion that the effort more reconcilable with reason was the greater, nobler, and sublimer. This rationalistic view of religion attained the highest clarity in the mind of Averroes.

Thus, together with the invaluable metaphysical and scientific teachings of the ages of Athens and Alexandria, the Arabs contributed something original to the foundation of modern civilization. It was scepticism—that powerful solvent of all faith. As soon as criticism challenges credulity, a new light dawns on the perspective of human progress. A curious book, anonymously published with the title 'Three

Impostors', occupies a prominent place in the early history of scepticism in Europe. The credit for that scandalous composition was attributed either to the heretical Christian Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, or the Muslim philosopher Averroes. The impostors were Moses, Christ, and Mohammad.

There had been scepticism before the thirteenth century, but no real incredulity. This doctrine and that had been disputed or rejected; but the foundation of Christian faith had never been touched. It was this foundation which was assailed when the idea was conceived that all religions have a common ground. If all religions are essentially the same, then the doctrine and dogmas peculiar to each should be discarded as pernicious obstacles to the realization of the spiritual unity of mankind. But freed from doctrines and dogmas, religion has no leg to stand upon. Its rationalization amounts to its destruction. The revolutionary idea of the common origin of all religions was conceived for the first time by the Arab thinkers.

Although Arabian learning reached its climax in Averroes, he was but the greatest and the latest of a long succession of great thinkers and scholars who flourished from the ninth to the thirteenth century. A brief reference to the substance of the teachings of the more illustrious of them will give some idea of the revolutionary significance of the learning which owed its origin to the cardinal principle of the Mohammedan religion, and was promoted by the staggering achievements of the 'Sword of God'.

Having established unity, as the terrestrial reflection of their spiritual unitarianism, and promoted economic prosperity in consequence thereof, the new Islamic nation devoted itself to the culture of the mind. For a hundred years it modestly learned from others, particularly the ancient Greeks. Thus equipped, it began to produce independent and original thought in every branch of learning.

Al Kandi was the earliest of the great Arabian philosophers. He flourished in the capital of the freethinking Abbassids, and leaped into fame in the beginning of the ninth century for teaching that philosophy must be based on mathematics; that is, it should cease to be idle speculation: abstract thought should be guided by precise reasoning, based on concrete facts and established laws, in order to produce positive results. The teacher of this doctrine deserves the great distinction of having anticipated Francis Bacon and Descartes by seven hundred years as a forerunner of modern philosophy. Even today there are many 'philosophers' and scholars who could be profited by the wisdom taught by the Saracen sage a thousand years ago.

Next to be mentioned is Al Farabi who lived in the following century, and taught at Damascus as well as Baghdad. His commentary on Aristotle was studied for centuries as an authoritative work on the subject. He also excelled in the medical science. Roger Bacon learned mathematics from him.

In the latter half of the tenth century appeared Avicena. He belonged to a rich landowning family of Bokhara engaged in prosperous trade. He wrote on mathematics and physics, but went down in history for his contributions to the medical science. The famous medical school of Salermo was a monument to his memory, and his work was the textbook of medicine throughout Europe until the sixteenth century. The great physician's philosophical views were so unorthodox that even the freethinking Emir of Bokhara could not resist the pressure of the Imams who were scandalized by the profanity of Avicena. He had to leave the court of his patron, and travelled all over the Arabic Empire teaching medicine and preaching his philosophy at different seats of learning.

In the eleventh century lived Al Hassan who deserves a place among the greatest scientists of all ages. Optics was his special subject. Having learned it from the Greeks, he went farther than they; he corrected their mistaken notion that the rays of light issue from the eye. By anatomical and geometrical reasoning, Al Hassan proved that the rays of light came from the object seen, and impinged on the retina. There is ground for belief, held by many historians of science, that Keppler borrowed his optical views from his Arab predecessor.

In the same century also lived Al Ghazali, son of an Andalusian merchant. He anticipated Descartes in reducing the standard of truth to self-consciousness. He stands out as the connecting link between the antique and modern scepticism. His memorable contribution to philosophy is better stated in his own words:

> Having failed to get satisfaction from religion, I finally resolved to discard all authority, and detach myself from opinions which have been instilled in me during the unsuspecting years of childhood. My aim is simply to know the truth of things; consequently it is indispensable for me to ascertain what is knowledge. Now, it was evident to me that certain knowledge must be that which explains the object to be known in such a manner that no doubt can remain, so that in future all error and conjecture respecting it must be impossible. Thus, once I have acknowledged ten to be more than three, if any one were to say: 'On the contrary, three is more than ten; and to prove my assertion I will change this stick into a serpent'; and if he actually did the miracle, still my conviction of his error would remain unshaken. His manoeuvre would only produce in me admiration for his ability, but I should not doubt my own knowledge. . . .

Al Ghazali held that knowledge could not possess such mathematical exactness, unless it were acquired empirically, and governed by irrefrangible laws established by experience. He was of the opinion that incontestable conviction could be acquired only through sense perception, and necessary truth, that is, causality. In reason (self-consciousness) he found the judge of the correctness of the perception of senses. One is amazed to find such unique boldness of thought in the atmosphere of a religion generally believed to be the most intolerant and fanatical. . . .

Abu Bakr, who lived in the twelfth century, was the first astronomer to reject the Ptolemic notion regarding the position of heavenly bodies. He conceived of a planetary system and celestial motion, which tended towards the epoch-making discoveries of Giordano Bruno, Galileo, and Copernicus. It is recorded that 'in his systems all movements were verified, and therefore no error resulted'. Abu Bakr died before setting forth his theory in a complete treatise. His pupil, Al Phetragius, popularized his teaching that all planetary bodies moved regularly. Throughout the middle-ages, the hypothesis was valued as a great contribution to astronomical knowledge. The teachings of a Muslim philosopher, which upset the biblical view of the Universe, penetrated the Christian monasteries. Not only Roger Bacon, but his illustrious opponent, Albertus Magnus, also acknowledged the indebtedness to the astronomical work of Al Phetragius in which Abu Bakr's views on planetary movement were expounded.

The basic principle of the philosophy of Averroes, the greatest and the latest of the great Arabian thinkers, have already been outlined. He lived at the turning point of the history of the Islamic culture. By the twelfth century, the pinnacle had been reached, and the forces of reaction had gathered strength to overwhelm those of progress. Islamic culture was already on the decline.

The freedom of thought permitted by the simple faith of a nomadic people had attained such soaring heights of boldness as eventually clashed with the temporal interests of the 'Commanders of the Faithful'. When the positive outcome of Islamic thought, developed so marvellously during five hundred years, was summarized in the highly revolutionary dictum of Averroes that reason is the only source of truth, Sultan Al Masur of Cordova, under the pressure of the priests, issued an edict condemning such heretical views to hell-fire, on the authority of religion. The denunciation of the noblest product of Islam naturally marked the beginning of its degeneration from a powerful lever of human progress to an instrument of reaction, intolerance, ignorance, and prejudice. Having played out its historic role—to rescue the precious patrimony of ancient culture out of the engulfing ruins of two Empires and the blinding darkness of two religions—Islam turned traitor to its original self, and became the black banner of Turkish barbarism and of the depredations of the Mongolian hordes.

Islam disowned its own. Averroes was driven away from the court of Cordova—the home of free thought for centuries. His books were condemned to the flames, not actually of fire, but of the more merciless sacerdotal reaction. Rationalism came to be identified with heresy. The very names of Averroes and his master, Aristotle, became anathema. In course of time, reaction triumphed so completely that for an orthodox Mohammedan, philosophy stood for 'infidelity, impiety, and immorality'. But the standard of spiritual progress, admirably held high, and boldly carried forward by the Arabs during five hundred years, could not be lowered and trampled under the fury of vain religiosity any more successfully by Islamic intolerance than previously by Christian piety and superstition. Averroes was disowned by his own people, only to be enthroned by those to whom belonged the future. The fierce contest between Faith and Reason, between despotic ignorance and freedom of thought, which rocked Europe and shook the foundation of the Catholic Church from the twelfth century onwards, drew inspiration from the teachings of the Arab philosophers. Averroes and Averroeism dominated the scientific thought of Europe for four hundred years.

Notes

[1] Alexander von Humboldt, *Cosmos*, Vol. II.

[2] Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

[3] Draper, *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, Vol. I, p. 325.

[4] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall.*

VII Islam and India

Although Islam came to India after it had played out its progressive role, and its leadership had been wrested from the learned and cultured Arabs, the revolutionary principles of the days of its origin and ascendency were still inscribed on its flag; and a critical study of history might reveal that the Muslim conquest of India was facilitated by similar native factors as in the case of Persia and the Christian countries. No great people, with a long history and old civilization, can ever succumb easily to a foreign invasion, unless the invaders command the sympathy and acquiescence, if not active support, of the masses of the conquered people. Brahmanical orthodoxy having overwhelmed the Buddhist revolution, India of the eleventh and twelfth centuries must have been infested with multitudes of persecuted heretics who would eagerly welcome the message of Islam.

Mohammad Ibn Kassim conquered Sindh with the active assistance of the Jats and other agricultural communities oppressed by the Brahman rulers. Having conquered the country, he followed the policy of the early Arab conquerors.

> He employed the Brahmans in pacifying the country by taking them into confidence. He allowed them to repair their temples and to follow their own religion as before, placed the collection of revenue in their hands, and employed them in continuing the traditional system of local administration.[1]

When even the Brahmans, some of them at any rate, were prepared to go over to the side of the *mlechha* conquerors, the social conditions of the country could not be very normal. Evidently, society was in such a disintegrated and chaotic state as to make the position even of the most privileged class insecure. That is usually the result of counter-revolution. A revolution may be defeated by a combination of forces; but that does not enable the triumphant forces of reaction to remove the causes of social disintegration which brought about the revolution. In India, the Buddhist revolution was not defeated; it was miscarried owing to its internal weakness. Social forces were not sufficiently mature to carry the revolution to victory. Consequently, after the downfall of Buddhism, the country found itself in a worse state of economic ruin, political oppression, intellectual anarchy, and spiritual chaos. Practically the entire society was involved in that tragic process of decay and decomposition. That is why not only the oppressed masses readily rallied under the banner of Islam which offered them social equality if not political equality; even the upper classes offered their services to the foreign aggressor out of selfish motives. That shows that, while the masses were in a state of despair, the upper classes were thoroughly demoralized.

As regards the spread of Islam in India, an ardent admirer of ancient Hindu culture like Havell, who cannot be suspected of any sympathy or even fairness to the Muslims, gives the following highly interesting testimony:

> Those who did so [embraced Islam] acquired all the rights of a Mussalman citizen in the law courts, where the Quran and not Aryan law and custom decided disputes in all cases. This method of proselytism was very effective among the lower castes of Hindus, specially among those who suffered from the severity of Brahmanical law with regard to the 'impure' classes.[2]

This is certainly not a very complimentary remark wrung from a firm believer in the perfection of Brahmanical law. In any case, it is clear that at the time of Mohammedan conquest, there lived in India multitudes of people who had little reason to be faithful to Hindu laws and the traditions of Brahman orthodoxy, and were ready to forsake that heritage for the more equitable laws of Islam which offered them protection against the tyranny of triumphant Hindu reaction.

Havell is a famous eulogist of Indo-European culture which he considers to be the noblest product of the creative genius of man. On the other hand, he has bitter antipathy for the Muslims. His opinion cannot be dismissed as biased against the Hindus. So, if even a historian like him found distasteful things happening in India in the past, conditions were very deplorable indeed. He writes:

> But the victorious progress of Islam in India is not to be accounted for by external reasons. It was mainly due to the political degeneration of *Aryavarta* which set in after the death of Harsha. . . . The social programme of the Prophet . . . gave every true believer an equal spiritual status . . . made Islam a political and social synthesis and gave it an imperial mission . . . Islam was a rule of life sufficient for the happiness of average humanity content to take the world as it is . . . Islam reached the zenith of its political strength at the critical period when the conflict between Buddhist philosophy and that of orthodox Brahminism was a potent cause of political dissension in northern India.[3]

King Harshavardhan died in the middle of the seventh century. Thus, the political disintegration of India was a process parallel to the rise of Islam. The death of a king, however great, does not mark the turning point of history. The process had been going on for many centuries. The Buddhist revolution arrested it for a time, only to be aggravated, accentuated, and accelerated on its defeat. Indeed, the monastic degeneration of Buddhism and its disintegrating influence on the entire Indian society greatly helped the Muslim conquest just as Christian monasticism had done elsewhere. . . .

A critical investigation of the internal as well as the external causes of the Muslim conquest of India is of practical value today. It will remove the prejudice that makes the orthodox Hindu look upon his Muslim neighbour as an inferior being. Freed from preconceived ideas, the Hindus will be in a position to appreciate the constructive consequences of the Muslim conquest of India. That will enable them to live down the hatred of the conquered for the conquerors. Unless a radical change of attitude is brought about by a sober sense of history, the communal question will never be solved. The Hindus will never be able to look upon the Muslims as integral parts of the Indian nation until they come to appreciate the contribution they made towards the emergence of Indian society out of the chaos caused by the breakdown of the antique civilization. Besides, a proper understanding of history derived from a correct understanding of the successful advent of the Muslims in India, will enable us to ascertain and stamp out the deeper causes of our present misfortune.

On the other hand, few Muslims of our days may be conscious of the glorious role played on the stage of history by the faith they profess. Many may disown and repudiate the rationalism and scepticism of the Arabs as deviations from the teachings of the Koran. But Islam occupies a memorable place in history thanks to its original unorthodoxy and irreligiosity made evident by the Arab philosophers, than to the later growth of a reactionary priesthood or to the barbarous fanaticism of the Tartar converts. Islam had played out its progressive role before it penetrated India. Its flag was planted on the banks of the India and the Ganges not by revolutionary Saracen heroes, but by Persians demoralized by luxury and the barbarians of Central Asia who had embraced Islam. Both had subverted the Arab Empire—that magnificent monument to the memory of Mohammad. Still, it was welcomed as a message of hope and freedom by the multitudinous victims of the Brahmanical reaction which had overthrown the Buddhist revolution and had consequently thrown the Indian society in a state of chaos. Neither the Persians nor the Mughal conquerors of India were entirely devoid of the traditional nobility, toleration, and liberalism of the Saracen heroes. The very fact that comparatively small bands of predatory invaders from distant lands could make themselves the rulers of a vast country for such a long time, and their alien faith found millions of converts, proves that they did satisfy certain objective requirements of the Indian society. Even when much of its original revolutionary fervour had been overwhelmed by reaction, Islam still exercised certain revolutionary influence on the Hindu society. The Mohammedan power was consolidated in India not so much by the valour of the invaders' arms as owing to the propagation of the Islamic faith and the progressive significance of Islamic laws.

Even the fiercely fanatical anti-Muslim Havell grudgingly admits:

> The effect of the Mussalman political creed upon Hindu social life was twofold: It increased the rigour of the caste system and aroused a revolt against it. The alluring prospect which it had held out to the lower strata of Hindu society was as tempting as it was to the Beduins of the desert . . . [It] made the *Sudra* a free man and potentially a Lord of the Brahmans. Like the Renaissance of Europe, it stirred up the intellectual waters, produced many strong men, and some men of striking originality of genius. Like the Renaissance also, it was essentially a city-cult; it made the nomad leave his tent and the *Sudra* abandon his village. It developed a type of humanity full of *joie de vivre* . . .[4]

To the above highly illuminating statement, it may only be added that the rise of reformers like Kabir, Nanak, Tukaram, Chaitanya, etc. who evidenced a popular revolt against Brahmanical orthodoxy, was to a great extent promoted by the social effects of Mohammedan conquest.

In view of this realistic reading of history, Hindu superciliousness towards the religion and culture of the *Muslims is absurd*. It insults history and injures the political future of our country. Learning from the Muslims, Europe became the leader of modern civilization. Even today, her best sons are not ashamed of the past indebtedness. Unfortunately, India could not fully benefit by the heritage of Islamic culture, because she did not deserve the distinction. Now, in the throes of a belated Renaissance, Indians, both Hindus and Muslims, could profitably draw inspiration from that memorable chapter of human history. Knowledge of Islam's contribution to human culture and proper appreciation of the historical value of that contribution would shock the Hindus out of their arrogant self-satisfaction, and cure the narrow-mindedness of the Muslims of our day by bringing them face to face with the true spirit of the faith they profess.

Notes

[1] Elliot, *History of India*.
[2] E. B. Havell, *Aryan Rule in India*.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.

Selections
from
HERESIES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

II The Philosophical Revolution
III Religion and Superstition
VII Marxism and Moral Philosophy

Introductory editorial note

The book of essays which was first published in December 1939 under the title *Heresies of the Twentieth Century*, consisted mainly of self-contained segments from the Prison Manuscripts which were chosen and slightly edited by M. N. Roy during the first two years after his release from jail. The book consisted of nine essays: 1. Heresies of the Twentieth Century Physics; 2. The Philosophical Revolution; 3. Religion and Superstition; 4. The Cult of Asceticism and Renunciation; 5. Irreligiosity and Atheism of Hindu Philosophy; 6. What is Marxism; 7. Marxism and Moral Philosophy; 8. The Cult of Non-Violence; 9. Science and its Philosophy. A second edition (pp. iv, 172) was published by Renaissance Publications, Bombay, in 1943. A copy of the second edition is preserved in the University of California Library at Berkeley. Considerations of space have constrained me to select only three essays for this volume.

The original drafts of seven out of nine essays in the published book are traced to three different volumes of the Prison Manuscripts. These are: Volume II, sheet nos. 185–59 (written in reverse order); Volume III, sheet nos. 147–51; Volume IX, sheet nos. 180–200; 222–33—a total of 110 closely handwritten pages. The earliest essays were, therefore, written in 1932, the latest in 1936. However, of the three essays included here, the first two belong to 1932 and the last to 1933–4. In the preface to the first edition Roy indicated that all the essays 'are self-contained, each dealing with a particular problem or a complex of interrelated problems'. 'My heresy', he further explained, 'amounts to a defence of Materialism which, in my opinion, has been reinforced by the discoveries of modern science, instead of being exploded, to be replaced by a neo-spiritualist mysticism'. In the first and longest essay of the book Roy argued against Sir Mohammad Suleiman, that 'the discoveries of the twentieth century physics did not make such fundamental concepts of philosophy as substance and causality untenable. . . . The concepts remain; only new contents must be put into them.' In the concluding essay he affirmed:

> The physical world exists. It is not to be constructed by man. It is there to be studied, explained, known, understood. That is the function of science. Science has performed that function, and has not discovered the roots of physical reality vanishing into nothingness. It has not reduced matter to mind. It does not reveal matter to be a creation of mind. Matter . . . is ontologically real. Its epistemological reality logically follows.

I have not included these two essays since the issues are discussed in greater detail in his other book *Science and Philosophy*, also written mostly in jail, from which chapters are included in this volume of the *Selected Works*.

Roy remained to the end a philosophical materialist, but at this stage he was very much a Marxist, although his Marxism was not quite of the Orthodox variety. The essay on 'Marxism and Moral Philosophy' included here, shows him as a Marxist materialist who holds that 'religion, philosophy, ethics, aesthetics, law are but the variegated forms of an ideological superstructure, built upon the foundation of economic relations among groups of individuals constituting a social organism'. He also speaks of man realizing 'his individuality as a member of the aggregate. The collective does not bear the stamp of the individuals composing it.' In the late forties, while still upholding materialism, Roy developed the philosophy of radical humanism; his view underwent very significant alternations. In *New Humanism: A Manifesto* (1947) he proclaimed: 'Morality must be referred back to man's innate rationality. Reason is the only sanction for morality. . . . The innate rationality of man is the only guarantee of a harmonious order, which will also be a moral order, because morality is a rational function.' Further: 'Radicalism thinks neither in terms of nation or of class; its concern is man; it conceives freedom as the freedom of the individual.' (1974 rpt. p. 34).

However, apart from Materialism, the continuity in his style of thinking (which, I believe, was a expression of his personality) may be seen in his insistence even during the Marxist period, that 'man is by nature non-conformist' and that he is able 'to behave morally not under compulsion, but by his own choice and voluntary submission to laws made for the welfare of the entire community.' The maxim of Epicurus remained the key to his ethical thinking both during the Marxist and the radical humanist phases.

SNR.

II The Philosophical Revolution

> We live in an age of science. Most people think that science has served humanity by producing electric light, motor-cars, aeroplanes etc. That is only a partial view. In fact, few realize the outlook that science has produced during the last two hundred years. Science has given us a new view of the universe . . . The future of India depends on a courageous application of scientific knowledge. As men learn to apply the scientific method to the problems of everyday life, in that measure he will rise to and reach his allotted height. Let the dogs of conservatism, ignorance and fanaticism bark, but the glorious caravan of the Indian nation will move on with irresistible force. [Sir C. V. Raman, at the Convocation of the University of Bombay, 1932.]

How many of the graduates—the trusted and sanguine custodians of India's future—fully grasped the revolutionary implication of the momentous utterance? Lest it should be drowned in the din of doubtful wisdom and platitudinous preachings that fill the intellectual atmosphere of our country, the progressive youth might profitably remember and reflect upon the weighty utterance of the distinguished savant.

One of the greatest scientists of our days, very creditably for himself, advocates a philosophical revolution as the condition for the much delayed, but inevitable, national Renaissance of India. The adoption of a scientific outlook, the application of the scientific method to the problems of life, will necessarily mean the rejection of ideas, ideals, institutions, and traditions which are erroneously cherished as the peculiar features of Indian culture, and to preserve and glorify which has consequently become an article of faith of Indian Nationalism. The posture of standing with the face turned backward is obviously incompatible with any striving for progress. The method and point of departure must be changed before any advance is possible.

Scientific outlook is essentially materialistic—a term so very misunderstood and piously abhorred generally in India. At any rate, scientific outlook is free from preconceived notions. It does not take anything for granted. It does not admit miracles, occasional or perpetual. It seeks and eventually finds, the cause of every phenomenon in order to understand that particular phenomenon and its connection with others. Whenever an event or appearance happens to defy understanding, and seems to disregard or transcend all the known laws of nature, the scientific mind does not call in the aid of prejudice and superstition. It simply admits its inability to comprehend the cause of the apparent miracle, but with the firm conviction that diligent and dispassionate investigation will, sooner or later, unravel what for the moment appears to be a mystery. Empirically established laws of nature are never suspended to make manifest supernatural powers. In short, scientific outlook does not admit of the possibility of something coming out of nothing. There is a causal connection in the interminable chain of events. Scientific mind rejects the theological maxim: '*Ex nihili omnium*' in favour of the thesis of the ancient Greeks: '*Ex nihili nihili*'. Scientific outlook is based on positive knowledge, not on belief, speculation or fantasy. As such, it is hostile to the religious, metaphysical, teleological view of the Universe, life, history, and society. This view is opposed to all free enquiry. Its pivot is authority which defies or eludes test. It declares human knowledge not only imperfect, but unreliable, placing it within insurmountable bounds.

Scientific method is inductive—to reach the general from the particular, the abstract from the concrete, the unknown from the known. The spiritual view of life follows in contrast to the deductive method—to start from an assumption, a hypothesis, which can never be verified, to explain phenomena in the light of an unknown and unknowable noumenon.

The religious, metaphysical, teleological view of life—a view that arrogates the pious distinction of spiritualism and starts from an assumption or unverifiable hypothesis, a Divine Providence, Cosmic Will, First Principle or Final Cause—is not a special genius of India. It dominates the life of every man, everywhere, until the sublime light of science dawns upon him, and dissipates the mist of ignorance, prejudice and superstition that has previously clouded his understanding. As long as he is not able to explain the multitudinous phenomena of nature that surround, surprise, and often terrify him, he rather helplessly than piously attributes their cause to some providential agency. Since his own life is actuated by motives, he imagines a Cosmic Will behind the natural phenomena which appear to be so well adapted and regulated for his benefit. Inside and outside himself, man finds an infinite variety of things advantageous to himself; for example, his physical organs and mental capacities, as well as the sun, air, water, etc. These useful things have been made neither by himself nor by any other man before. So, there must be a final cause for them all. The unscientific mind cannot conceive of such well-regulated things happening by themselves, without a plan made and directed by an intelligent force, which by its very nature must be omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. He never stops to ask how did the final cause come into being. That would be irreligious.

Thus assumed by the ignorance of man the hypothetical being (which might pass under any of the various denominations—God, Universal Soul, Divine Providence, First Principle, Final Cause, etc.) becomes the supreme object and the inexhaustible source of all knowledge. Intellectual and spiritual activity of man becomes a long, dismal search for a light which always recedes before any approach, luring the unfortunate votary into a confusion, confounded progressively by the vanity of virtue. But there have been candid souls who would rather admit defeat than seek the questionable glory of self-deception or fraudulent victory. For instance, the venerable Roman philosopher, Seneca, pathetically declared that the longer he contemplated Plato's sublime conception of the Triad (the First Cause, the Logos, and the Universal Soul), the less he could grasp of it. In such vain pursuit, philosophy degenerates into a dreary record of endless dispute, or pedantic dissertations about the nature of an hypothetical being which must always remain a hypothesis, since it could never be verified by the vulgar, but the only reliable, test of experience.

Ideas, ideals, institutions, and traditions, that are fondly cherished as the token of the supposed superiority of India's culture, belong to the dark ages of humanity, when prejudice parades in the garb of piety, ignorance claims the sublimity of virtue, and idle speculation puts on the dignity of philosophy. The spell is broken ultimately by the first conquests of science.

The epoch-making discoveries of Galileo, Copernicus, and Kepler shattered the foundation of the time-honoured religious philosophy and the metaphysical outlook of Universe and life. It was found that observation of natural phenomena without any preconceived notion led to conclusions which upset the celestial and terrestrial order sanctioned by religion and theory. A philosophical revolution took place. A radical change in the outlook on the problems of the Universe, life, history, and society became inevitable. That change was a condition for the great political revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which ushered in the marvellous era of modern civilization.

The definite inauguration of a new philosophy on the basis of experimental science and the inductive method of reasoning, is associated with the names of Francis Bacon and Descartes. It will be interesting and instructive to recollect Bacon's characterization of the old orthodox method that he set out to combat, and enunciation of the new he advocated.

> Whence can arise such vagueness and sterility in all the physical systems which have hitherto existed in the world? It is not certainly from anything in nature itself; for the steadiness and regularity of the laws by which it is governed clearly mark them out as objects of certain and precise knowledge. It can therefore arise from nothing else but the perverseness and insufficiency of the methods which have been pursued. Men have sought to make the world from their own conception, and to draw from their own minds all the materials which they employed; but if, instead of doing so, they had consulted experience and observation, they would have had facts, and not opinions, to reason about, and might have ultimately arrived at the knowledge of the laws which govern the material world. As things are at present conducted, a sudden

> transition is made from sensible objects and particular facts, to general propositions which are accepted principles, and round which, as round so many fixed poles, disputations and arguments continually revolve. From the propositions thus hastily assumed, all things are derived by a process compendious and precipitate, ill-suited to discovery, but wonderfully accommodated to debate. The way that promises success is the reverse of this. It requires that we should generalize slowly, going from particular things to those that are but one step more general; from those to others of still greater extent, and soon to such as are universal. By such means we may hope to arrive at principles, not vague and obscure, but luminous and well-defined, such as nature herself will not refuse to accept. I propose to establish progressive stages of certainty. The evidence of sense, helped and guarded by a certain process of correction, I retain; but the mental operation which follows the act of sense, I, for the most part, reject, and instead of it, I open and lay out a new and certain path for the mind to proceed in, starting directly from the simple sensuous perceptions.

With all his brilliance, Bacon, however, felt his unexplored way with caution and prudence. He avoided a frontal attack upon the established creeds and institutions of religion, while dexterously shaking its very foundation. He adopted a clever stratagem. He did not deny the existence of God or the immortality of the soul, but pleaded that these basic questions of faith should be answered by philosophy instead of by theology; that is to say, by reason instead of by dogma. Once God and soul are placed under the stepmotherly care of philosophy, nothing but dire misfortune can overtake these venerable prejudices. You can just as well take a fish out of water and let it thrive on the high and dry land. Disguised as an humble faithful, the infidel threw down the fateful gauntlet to the faith together with her shady entourage of teleology, theology, and metaphysics which had for ages served as so many fetters for the spirit of man. The war thus declared over three hundred years ago, is still being waged. Science has scored splendid victories; but she had to fight every inch of the ground. With desperate tenacity prejudice had resisted its advancing opponent; and the final victory of science is still to be won.

Descartes opened the attack more courageously than his older contemporary. His starting point was absolute doubt about everything the reality and veracity of which could not be established by sense perception. The rejection of authority as the unquestionable testimony for truth logically led to the deposition of theology from the proud position it had occupied for more than a thousand years. Nothing should be accepted as true unless it were proved to be so, and the standard of truth was not authority or the mystic fantasy called revelation, but reason. In expounding his memorable theory of vortices, Descartes, indeed, made a concession to the time-honoured prejudice regarding the origin of creation; but the sheer formality of his accommodating attitude was unmistakably exposed by the cynical remark that 'yet it would be of eminent interest to see how the Universe might have evolved by itself'. In the bloody age of heresy-hunting, the very postulation of such a hypothesis represented great boldness which could proceed only from a firm scientific conviction. The Cartesian theory of vortices marks the beginning of modern physics and cosmology. It was the continuation of ancient atomism, propounded by the philosophers of ancient Greece—Democritos and Epicuros, the brilliant light of knowledge which had been all but extinguished in the dark ages of religiosity, miracles, and revealed wisdom. Since the days of Descartes, physics has advanced with giant strides, pushing aside his ingenious hypothesis which, nevertheless, will always retain the great merit of having boldly blazed the trail of progress—of inaugurating a new era of spiritual freedom. The great merit of the Cartesian hypothesis was that it constructed a physical system in which the forced assumption of an original creator appeared to be entirely superfluous, the process of the evolution of the Universe being purely mechanical, the creator having absolutely no power to alter the minutest detail.

Both the founders of the scientific method emphatically repudiated the prejudice of a Final Cause. In view of this decisive negative attitude regarding the cardinal principle of religion and theology, their forced and formal recognition of the existence of God loses the cogency of conviction. Descartes wrote:

> We can only presume it [the first creation of God], since God did not take us into his counsel. This habit of searching for a Final Cause has no use for the knowledge of physical and natural things. In physics, the appeal to a Final Cause is idle, since every conclusion must rest on solid ground.

The philosophical revolution heralded by Bacon and Descartes triumphantly marched ahead during the last three hundred years. With its inconoclastic methods, science advanced steadily, showing how flagrantly the certainties of experience contradicted, and were contradicted by, the notions and fantasies which had been raised on the proud pedestal of eternal truth by authority and superstition. Time-honoured articles of faith, teleological explanation of the problems of nature and society, the misty wisdom of metaphysics—all these landmarks of the spiritualist view of life could not stand the test of inductive enquiry. It became evident that should the old mode of thought remain in force, should established doctrines, dogmas, and authority continue to govern the life of man, individually and socially, his own experience must be disbelieved, knowledge must be fearfully shunned as the serpent in the garden of Eden, superstition must be cherished as spirituality, ignorance adored as virtue, vain fantasy accorded the distinction of revealed wisdom, and we should still appeal to Popes and priests for the answer to the problems of the physical and social sciences. But the imperious advance of knowledge enabled man to withdraw more and more phenomena from the inscrutable will of supernatural agencies, and trace their causes to immanent properties and mechanical laws of nature.

Still, whenever and wherever science failed to give fully satisfactory explanation of all the phenomena, man continued to place reliance upon supernatural agencies, supposing them to be beyond the reach of science and maintaining in consequence that the defective and imperfect scientific knowledge, which could never attain the absolute truth, was itself possible only owing to the 'divine spark' in man. The inscrutable will and invisible hand of the Almighty were triumphantly detected whenever the mechanical laws of nature were not yet discovered or the operation of them appeared to be suspended by the intervention of unforeseen factors. Ignorance became the shrine of God, the only argument in favour of religion. Hence there were men, with a completely scientific outlook in astronomical, physical, and chemical investigation, who would not use scientific method in the investigation of the organic world, particularly in human affairs. Biology and psychology still remained confused by theological and metaphysical prejudices.

It is, however, no paradox that so many scientifically-minded men, even some great scientists themselves, should linger under the waning influence of religion and metaphysics. The cause of the apparent paradox was the specialization of scientific study. Scientists had to devote themselves wholly to particular branches of investigation. Consequently, their vision was circumscribed by the happenings in small limited fields which were but minute fractions of the vast domain of the Universe. Sole occupation with particular groups of phenomena made the average man of science lose sight of the comprehensive nature of scientific knowledge as a whole. As it were, they failed to see the forest for the trees. The very creditable and profusely productive zeal for practice in detail eclipsed the broad vision of theory. In short, many scientists were not able to draw general philosophical consequences from their own discoveries and knowledge. The coordination of the vast knowledge, acquired in the diverse branches of science, was left to philosophy, but to perform that function, philosophy had to revolutionize herself.

The development of biology quickened the philosophical revolution. All animals lower than man had been characterized by Descartes as automata. The discovery that organisms were also governed by mechanical laws enabled the French philosopher de la Metrie to shock the prejudiced world by declaring that man was also a machine. Comparative anatomy traced the descent of man from lower forms of animals; and all the diverse phenomena of the organic world were reduced to a common point of origin which merged into the primordial unity of inorganic matter. The mysterious entity life was discovered to be nothing but a property of organic matter. Ideas were proved to be the production of mind, which in its turn is a function of a material organ, the brain. In consequence of all these revolutionary discoveries regarding the mysterious vital phenomena as well as the so-called spiritual essence of man, the old conception of soul—the immortal divine spark in man—appeared to be only an imagination. With its individual expression, the universal soul must also go.

While each great discovery of science dealt a staggering blow to the hoary castle of religion, built in the air of faith, and consequently added stone after stone to the solid foundation of the philosophy of Materialism, prejudice persisted by virtue of momentum. In course of time the progress of the philosophical revolution was retarded by the change in the social position of the bourgeoisie. Struggling to liberate themselves from feudal bondage, the bourgeoisie had found a powerful weapon in the revolutionary philosophical consequences of science. By repudiating the authority of religion and theology, science destroyed the ideological foundation and moral justification of the feudal social order. The bourgeoisie preached and practised the 'sacred right of revolt' in temporal as well as in spiritual matters, and became the ruling power. In a changed situation, advantageous to themselves, their philosophical outlook changed. As an oppressed class, they had advocated revolution, ideological as well as political. In power, they became conservative. Without authority, there could be no domination of one class over the entire society; an authority on earth could not be firmly established unless backed, directly or indirectly, by some supernatural sanction. So, faith and religion were rescued from their ruins. For the vulgar, the old discredited God with all his threadbare paraphernalia, was again allowed to rule; the intellectual élite, however, had become too sophisticated to relapse into crude belief, severely shaken, if not thoroughly exploded, by science. For their edification, religion appeared in the new garb of modern idealist philosophy. The untenable doctrine of a personal creator was replaced by the fascinating fantasy of the Absolute Idea. The bitterest critic of the Christian Church, the cynical Voltaire, himself became an advocate of the lost cause, and replied to the atheism of the philosopher Pierre Bayle with the following argument: 'If there is no God, we must discover one. Give Bayle five hundred peasants to rule, and he will immediately recognize the usefulness of religion.' That was the most forceful argument against the case in the defense of which it was advanced. It showed up God and religion in their true role. A few decades later, Kant did not blush to proclaim that he must set aside science in order to make room for faith. Yet, his 'all-shattering' critical philosophy has swept away all the debris of medieval speculation. His monumental work on the theory of Newton had driven God even away from the precarious position conceded by the latter.

If the selfish interest of the bourgeoisie came in conflict with the philosophical revolution, and sought to curb its progress, the future of mankind required its culmination. Therefore it was impossible to resist the historical striving for the proper appreciation of the far-reaching theoretical value of scientific discoveries in their entirety, with the object of weaving them into a comprehensive system of philosophy. To disown the materialist tendency of its birth, modern philosophy launched upon the wild career of idealism which was raised to a giddy height by Hegel. In his eagerness to vindicate the basic principle of true philosophy—the primal unity of things—Hegel destroyed modern classical Idealism. Without a dualist conception of the Universe—matter and spirit—idealist philosophy is not possible. The monist conception must be either materialist, or be lost in the inextricable wilderness of solipsism or nihilism. If the original unity is reduced to a spiritual existence, the phenomenal world must be declared to be a hallucination. For, matter can never evolve out of pure spirit, except with the intervention of omnipotence which knows no law. With the postulate of such intervention, religion is restored to the throne of authority, and philosophy must accept a humble space at the foot of the throne. Besides, spirit itself cannot exist without being subordinated to the limitation of space, in which case it would cease to be what it claims to be. Since, in the age of science and positive knowledge, mankind cannot possibly believe that the grand process of the evolution of the Universe is a bad dream, Materialism must be its philosophy, should it have any philosophy worth the name.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the lowered banner of philosophical revolution was raised again, this time by the ideologists of the toiling masses. The new leaders of the revolution were equipped with a formidable weapon forged by the latest and the greatest idealist philosopher, Hegel. It was the dialectic method of thought which ousted formal logic. Exposing the transitoriness of everything, and revealing the constant conception of a new in the womb of the passing old, dialectics put an end to all authority. No weapon could be more welcome to the leaders of the philosophical revolution. Out of the magnificent ruins of Hegelian Absolute Idealism, Feuerbach rescued the positive contribution of the classical philosophy as the basis of the 'Philosophy of the Future'—Materialism. Armed with an encyclopedic knowledge of all the sciences, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels clearly and comprehensively stated the new outlook of life, opened by the discoveries of science during the preceding three hundred years. In the bright light of that materialist outlook, all the problems of nature, life, history and society, appears devoid of all mystery, and man attains the full height of his glory as the sole master of his fate.

Undoubtedly, even today, science has not penetrated into all the mysteries of the Universe. But what has been conclusively established is the certainty of scientific knowledge, and that there is nothing unknowable. Our knowledge is not perfect—far from being so; but there is no limit to our capacity to know. Besides, perfect knowledge is an ideal, never to be attained, because when there will be nothing more to know, extinction will overtake mankind. Science has burst the bubble of absolute knowledge and eternal truth. Every day we know more: consequently, our knowledge is constantly rectified, enlarged, and amplified. The *summum bonum* of scientific knowledge is that there is nothing fixed—everything is in a constant flux. The only thing eternal and immutable is perpetual change, and that this eternal phenomenon of change is governed by mechanical laws inherent in itself. Thus science justifies its name by merging itself into philosophy, and philosophy ceases to be idle and vain speculation to stand out in the fullness of the glory of the science of sciences.

III Religion and Superstition

In a statement made at the termination of his fast, Mahatma Gandhi expressed the following optimistic view: 'The tremendous awakening that has taken place in the country during these five days fills me with a hope that orthodoxy will surpass itself and rid Hinduism of the canker of untouchability which is eating into its vitals.' At the same time, he declared: 'I could not expect all of a sudden to revolutionize Hindu thought.' One may be surprised to hear two such discordant notes struck simultaneously. But a little reflection reveals that the pessimistic note which, by the way, is more in tune with the rude realities of the situation, flows logically from the fallacious basis of the Mahatma's optimism. He hopes that the easy success of his threat to put on the crown of martyrdom will induce Hindu orthodoxy to give up voluntarily a prejudice which is so very essential for its very existence. Orthodoxy must cease to be itself if it were to perform what the Mahatma's stout optimism expects of it. What is expected is nothing short of suicide. As such vicarious offerings are seldom made in this world of realities; the Mahatma has ample reason to be pessimistic on afterthought.

A thorough revolutionization of Hindu thought is, indeed, the condition for the removal of untouchability together with many other social evils which hamper India's social progress. But this condition can never be fulfilled with the sanction of these very elements which will be destroyed by the revolution. Revolutionization of Hindu thought means nothing less than the end of Hindu orthodoxy; of the Hindu religion itself. Superstition and prejudice are the twin pillars on which all religions rest. Remove these props, and the entire venerable edifice of religion collapses. This general rule is all the more applicable to Hinduism which is reared rather upon social customs and habits than upon an established form of worship or a uniform system of theological dogmas supporting certain definite articles of faith. Curiously enough, those who call themselves 'aggressive nationalists' base the claim to superiority for Hinduism precisely on the evidence of its backwardness. Even as a religion, Hinduism bears the stamp of backwardness. Rigorous monotheism is the highest form of religion.

The essence of all religions is the belief in one or more supernatural forces (personified or in abstract) exercising control or dominion over things and events terrestrial. As soon as man thus resigns his being and will to the inviolable guardianship of an agency, the existence and power of which are assumed *a priori*, he naturally sacrifices reason on the altar of superstition; he barters away his native claim to knowledge for the complacence of prejudices which derive the force of venerable wisdom and divine truth from fraudulent practices. The primitive inquisitiveness gives way to the awe or wonder for powers supernatural, never to be comprehended by [the] human mind. Criticism makes room for credulity. Ignorance becomes bliss, and proudly insults the search for truth as vain and delusive.

These evidences of 'spiritualist genius' are not the monopoly of India. They fill the history of all religions. For example, Tertullian, one of the fathers of the Christian church, asserted that the problem that had occupied the great philosophers of Greece were no problem for an ordinary Christian artisan. Similarly, today, any Hindu pseudo-intellectual would readily repeat the cheap sneer of Swami Vivekananda that Hindu philosophy begins where Western knowledge ends. Prejudice confounds theology with philosophy—with an impatient gesture of supposed superiority. Even the intelligent do not notice that their specious arguments against the reliability of scientific knowledge only reveals the damaging fact that ignorance is the foundation of religion—that God can dwell only in darkness.

Yet religion represents the ideology of human society at a certain stage of its evolution. Essentially based upon ignorance, superstition and prejudice, religion nevertheless is not a constant phenomenon. Like all social phenomena, it changes constantly. Its forms change together with [under the influence of] the changes in the material conditions of social life. The religion of a people, therefore, is a reliable measure of its social progress: It is the gauge of its civilization.

The religion of primitive peoples takes the form of fetishism—the worship of stones, trees, animals, and crudely constructed idols. Gradual development of the faculty of imagination creates the belief in a variety of gods, as so many personifications of natural phenomena, the cause of which are unknown to the primitive man. In its earlier stage, the belief in supernatural forces and beings is the product of awe caused by incomprehensible events, such as thunder, lightning, earthquake, flood, drought, pestilence, etc., etc. Fear is the most fertile breeding ground of superstition. Worship takes the form of sacrifice to propitiate the gods. Those officiating at the sacrificial ceremonies gradually grow up into a case of priests, claiming the occult power to know the devious ways and inscrutable wills of the gods. By virtue of its office, and thanks to the prevalence of superstition the sacerdotal caste becomes all-powerful. To increase and consolidate its power, the priestly caste promotes superstitious practices so as to raise them to the noble status of social virtue—the evidence of religiosity. The priests can propitiate the angry gods, or secure boons from the milder and indulgent ones. They are supposed to be in the possession of occult wisdom which makes them conversant with the ways of the gods who govern the destiny of mankind—ways that are not to be comprehended by the ordinary mortal. Consequently, the word of the priest is guaranteed by an elaborate system of traditions, customs, institutions, and ceremonies, superstitious observance of which establishes the distinction of proud orthodox meritorious religiosity.

Intellectual progress enables man eventually to rise above the savagery of fetishism, and, later, above polytheistic beliefs. The worship of stones, trees, and animals no longer affords him sufficient spiritual satisfaction which he needs as the only solace in the dark and distressing perspective of the chaos created by the dissolution of the primitive tribal society. The disintegration of the tribal and patriarchal social order inevitably shakes the belief in its patron deities and their sacerdotal ministers. Advance of knowledge undermines the foundation of gross superstition. The power and position of priesthood are challenged by the growing desire to enter into the nature of things. The desire culminates in the erection of the glorious monument of the ancient materialistic and speculative philosophies.

But positive knowledge is still too backward to overwhelm superstition. It leaves the masses unaffected. A new form of religion arises on a subtle basis which fortifies faith by purging it of fetishistic and polytheistic crudities. Monotheistic religions claim Divine Revelation for their origin. Superstition acquires new strength. For the dogma of revelation must be established by miracles which, suspending the laws of nature, makes the will of God manifest. Popular credulity makes history out of imaginary legends, and fraudulent practices serve the holy purpose. Laws of nature are the manifestation of the will of God; yet these very laws must be suspended to make the will of God manifest to the vulgar eye. Such a flagrantly illogical and self-contradictory doctrine must be rejected as fantastic and absurd or accepted as divine, inspired, revealed wisdom, since no human mind could possibly have conceived it. Under the new religion, human life continues to be guided, though no longer by a number of discredited deities, yet by the inscrutable will of a supreme being or the mysterious operation of some supernatural force.

Monotheism represents the striving for the establishment of a centralized society on the ruins of the antique order of warring city states or inflated empires—conglomerations of heterogeneous peoples held together by brute force. As such, it attacks all the ceremonies, customs, traditions, institutions, and habits established by the earlier form of religion. Barbarous prejudices descending from the days of fetishisms are replaced by the dogmas of theology. The poetic idolatry of polytheistic superstition gives way to the blind faith in a supreme being or the mystic notion of an explicable first principle.

But dogmatic theology, futile speculations about the nature of the unknown and unknowable final cause, and the vain efforts for the realization of the unrealizable—all these start as much from preconceived notions and superstitious beliefs as the fearful worship of fetishisms or the devout ceremonies of natural religion. Monotheistic religions free [the] human mind from the bondage of grosser superstition, while encumbering it with more subtle forms of the same virtue or vice which, nevertheless, are not altogether incompatible with social progress. Indeed, under certain conditions of history, monotheistic religion is the ideology of the forces of social revolution. The monotheism of Jesus Christ and later on of Mohammed laid down the foundation of modern European culture.

Vedic Hinduism was a natural religion. In course of time, its social basis—clan and patriarchal family—decayed. The decomposition appears to have reached the climax towards the end of the Epic Era when the Kashatriya clans were practically all exterminated in a gigantic civil war, depicted in the Mahabharata. But there did not emerge from the chaos any force of a new cohesion. Brahmanic supremacy became absolute in the conditions of social dissolution. The natural religion of the Vedas, instead of being replaced by a higher form of faith, namely, monotheism, degenerated into the fatalism of the Smritis and the absurd extravagances of Pauranic superstitions. Eventually, the quasi-materialistic agnosticism of Buddha spread, as the ideology of a great social revolution which was to clear away the ruins of the antique society. But [the] sacerdotal tyranny of the Brahmans had been entrenched behind superstitions, ceremonies, and customs which defied reform on the authority of the Vedas, always true and infallible because of their supposed divine origin. This doctrine concerning the origin of the Vedas was very useful for fraudulent practices. Brahmanic absolutism was continuously reinforced by opportune interpolations. Supported by the insidiously fostered forces of popular superstition, Hindu orthodoxy resisted the triumphant march of the Buddhist revolution for nearly a thousand years, and finally overwhelmed it. That was the most tragic event in the history of India. The cause of the defeat of Buddhism was that it was rather nihilistic than monotheistic. On the other hand, the rudiment of materialism inherent in a religion making no place for God, was not boldly developed. Consequently, Buddhism went down in the morass of monastic absurdities and extravagances, and was eventually contaminated by the very corruptions it had revolted against.

Victorious Hindu reaction, while arming itself with Sankaracharya's ambiguous monotheism, could consolidate its shaken position only by fomenting the forces of popular ignorance and superstition. The ceremonies and worships of the Vedic religion had been greatly suppressed during the Buddhist period. Whatever still survived, was condemned by Sankara's reform. But Hindu theology, either of the pre-Buddhist era or of Sankara, remained a monopoly of the Brahman intellectual, and monastic orders. The masses of the people were left without any religion except the superstitions of the degenerate Pauranic faith, and a rich store of social prejudices (caste, untouchability, *achar bichar*) jealously guarded and persistently fostered by Brahmanic orthodoxy.

Today, after the lapse of many hundred of years, the religious life of the masses of the Hindu population is little changed. It is devoid of any spiritual ardour, being a dull monotony of superstitious customs and habits. The ordinary member of the Hindu society is without any definite creed or faith; his idea of God is hazy; he seldom performs any devotional practice regularly; as a matter of fact, he is a remarkably irreligious man. But his orthodoxy flames into fanaticism with regard to the prejudices and superstitions governing his daily life. He blindly believes in the laws of karma which, if logically interpreted, must dispense with the doctrine of a supernatural force guiding human life. Still, he has been taught through [the] ages that this inexorable law is the expression of the inflexible will of God, which can be propitiated only through the scrupulous respect for traditional social customs, and rigid practice of *achar* in personal habits. The pernicious doctrine of karma sanctifies all the inequities and inequalities of the Hindu society. Social tyranny and ostracism receive the stamp of divine justice—the fate of everybody has been determined by his own karma in a previous birth. It is a vicious circle, with no way for escape. The superstitious belief in the doctrine of karma kills all initiative in an orthodox Hindu. His religion is to observe patiently and passively an absurd mass of time-honoured customs and rights.

In the light of this hastily drawn sketch of the historical background of Hindu society, the problem of untouchability takes on a more serious aspect than can be abolished with the magnanimous sanction of orthodoxy. It is an integral part of a whole complex of problems. Therefore it can not be solved separately from the complex which is the fossilized Hindu society. It is a ludicrous superstition, but exactly as such it is the pillar of Hindu orthodoxy. Untouchability and the allied social curses will go only with Hindu orthodoxy itself, which instituted them to reinforce the undermined foundation of its holy temple.

Untouchability will go only when the multitudinous victims of Hindu orthodoxy will outgrow the sinister spell of superstition. Hindu society and Hindu thought will be revolutionized, not by the martyrdom of a Mahatma. It will be done by irresistible assaults upon the holy rampart of superstition sanctified with the name of religion. These assaults are being delivered even today by the inexorable forces of economic necessity which do not obey the law of karma. Theatrical demonstrations of liberalism on the part of orthodox caste Hindus are but faint echoes of the thunder of the impending revolution; they are rather feeble and futile efforts to ward off the nemesis of orthodoxy.

VII Marxism and Moral Philosophy

The foundation of Marxian ethics is laid by the dialectics of Hegel and the scientific Humanism of Feuerbach. Setting aside the time-honoured religious, theological and metaphysical dogmas, Feuerbach placed man, of flesh and blood, in the centre of the world and proceeded to interpret everything, including those dogmas themselves, by human standards. Marx and Engels replaced Feuerbach's abstract conception of man by the dynamic conception of man as a social being, involved in a continuous process of becoming. The Marxian development of Feuerbach's Humanism was the result of a better application of dialectics to the study of historical and social phenomena. Feuerbach's critique was all-shattering. Everything appeared in a new light. The human essence of divine conception was laid bare. Theological mysteries were revealed as the result of anthropological preoccupations. The carnal core of religion was discovered. Faith was found to be the expression of egoism. But there was a fundamental weakness in Feuerbach's philosophy. It was in the point of departure. The being of a man determines his consciousness and being is governed by its own laws. What are these laws? How do they operate? Feuerbach omited to answer these questions. Man explained everything, but the man himself remained unexplained and appeared as an absolute category.

Marx maintained that the consciousness of man is indeed determined by his physical existence; but the evolution of human thought—the spiritual progress of man—is determined by social conditions which, in their turn, change the conditions of the physical being of man. The view of man as an absolute standard irresistibly leads to the conclusion that man must think and act similarly in all ages, under all circumstances. The corollary to this absolute conception is the idea of eternal truth and immutable standards of morality. All possible ambiguity about the being of man which determines his consciousness is removed by the following view of man's relation to nature: 'By acting on nature outside himself and transforming it man simultaneously changes his own nature [Marx].'

The struggle for existence is conducted by man not as individuals, but collectively. From the dawn of his history, man has been a social being. Therefore, the laws governing man's being and thought are to be sought in his social relations. Exhaustive investigation of history enabled Marx to establish the fact that the consciousness of man, after all, is determined by the way he makes his living. Since the modes of making his living and the modes of living itself change from time to time, the form of human thought and the modes of expressing it, change correspondingly.

Religion, philosophy, ethics, aesthetics, law, are but the variegated forms of an ideological superstructure, built upon the foundation of economic relations among groups of individuals constituting a social organization.

As soon as man realizes that, as a social being, he is the maker of his own fate, he frees himself from the chains of the metaphysical moral philosophy and throws off the tyranny of dogmatic morality. The basic principle of life is neither absolute truth nor abstract goodness. It is change—continuous advance, a process of becoming, in course of which mankind develops spiritually and morally, thanks to the progressively acquired knowledge of the objective truth of existence. Human ideas and ideals have always changed. The cultural history of mankind is the record of that process of change. With the power derived from scientific knowledge, mankind finds itself in the position to control the process of future development. In the past, social changes took place at random. That gave rise to the idea of an arbitrary force dictating the events of human existence. Now social changes can be brought about according to a previously worked out plan. Moral philosophy should so modify itself as to be able to contribute to the plan of social reconstruction of the future of mankind. Only such principles, standards, and values, as are deduced from collective social experience, can claim general validity and demand general observance without prejudicing common welfare. Concepts must necessarily change as social conditions change.

In its traditional forms, with fixed principles and absolute concepts, moral philosophy serves as a line of ideological defence of the established social order. In this rule, it gives lie to its own profession; it defends sectional interest against general welfare which demands revolutionary readjustment of social relations, and a relativist, realist conception of morality to justify, indeed to call for, such a change.

The ideas of goodness, right and wrong, just and unjust, constitute the foundation of traditional ethics. But these ideas have never been clearly defined or traced to some rational origin. Some reflection reveals how hopelessly contradictory these ideas are. What does not conform with the values cherished by an established social order, is bad from its point of view. Thus, what is bad for the present, is good for the future. Because, when a social transformation becomes necessary for the welfare of the aggregate, cherished values are disputed, traditional ideas are unsettled, venerable ideals are rejected by the forces striving for the historically necessary transformation—a process taking place according to the basic principle of life.

Man is by nature non-conformist: otherwise, mankind would be still living contentedly under the primeval conditions of savagery. Therefore, as Hegel put it, it would be more true to say that man is by nature bad, than to repeat the platitudinous dictum that man is by nature good. Whenever any section of mankind took a step forward, it violated the established laws of society and the traditional canons of morality. An example to the point is the Indian habit of condemning modern civilization. The ideas and ideals of modern civilization do not conform with the canons and codes of morality appropriate for the maintenance of society in a backward state. Therefore, they are bad. But they are good and desirable for those who would be benefited by the subversion of the reactionary social order.

Moral philosophy, revolutionized by the rejection of the notion of absolute values, quickens in man the consciousness of the spirit of nonconformity, which is in his very being as the subjective expression of the fundamental principle of life. Marxism as a revolutionary philosophy promotes the process of social transformation necessary for the progress and welfare of mankind, which derives from scientific knowledge the power to shape its own future. Therefore, rejection of dogmatic morality is a part of Marxism. It alone is not rejected. It crumbles down because Marxism, in the light of scientific knowledge, reveals the fictitious and fraudulent nature of the religious and metaphysical sanctions of moral philosophy.

Originally, moral philosophy, that of the West at any rate, grew out of the background of antique naturalism. Even modern moral philosophy disclaims any direct bearing upon religion. The founder of Western moral philosophy, Socrates, was killed for disbelief in the gods of natural religion. At the close of the middle-ages Humanism and rationalist Metaphysics represented the spirit of revolt against dogmatic religion and mystic theology. Nevertheless, the abstract concepts and categorical imperatives of moral philosophy, antique as well as modern, derive their absolute authority ultimately from faith. They are traced back to intuition which cannot be further analysed. The final, intuitive standards of morality, must be taken for granted. This is a precarious foundation for any system of philosophical thought. Therefore, the sanctions for the standard are derived, by implication, if not explicitly, from the reference to some supernatural, metaphysical world.

The founder of moral philosophy was not Socrates himself, but the Platonic Socrates, that is, Socrates as interpreted by his great disciple who deduced the metaphysical 'moral order' from his doctrine of the Logos. That metaphysical foundation of the irreligious moral teachings of Socrates became the philosophical cornerstone of Christian theology.

India never developed a system of moral philosophy in the strict sense of the term, that is, independent of religion. The Smritis and Samhitas represent the nearest approach. But the codes of individual and social conduct laid down in those Shastras are rather religious injunctions coming from the priesthood, than moral percepts to indicate a way of individual spiritual elevation which does not lie through its rites and rituals of religion. They are religious laws for the governance of secular affairs.

In the last analysis, the notion of the absolute constitutes the foundation of moral philosophy which sets up fixed universal standards of goodness, justice, virtue, etc.; which is composed of dogmatic concepts of morality; which lays down categorical imperatives for the guidance of human conduct. Ask any moral philosopher what is good, the sum and substance of whatever and however much he may have to say in answer will be: Good is conformity with the idea of goodness. If you demand a definition of goodness, you will be told that it is an unanalysable intuitive category which cannot be defined. In other words, it is an absolute concept and as such metaphysical. Modern moral philosophy has improved little upon Plato. The mystic notion of the 'moral order' is derived from the picture of the world of abstract ideas. It is supposed that man instinctively strives to measure up to the intuitive concepts of morality. If this theoretical position is consistently maintained, every human action should be regarded as moral. But in practice, moral philosophy becomes dogmatic and lays down codes of human conduct. The contradiction between theory and practice is justified with the argument that the conscious mind (intelligence), influenced by environment, obscures man's moral intuition and obstructs the instinctive striving to conform with the 'moral order'. Thus, goodness, though supposed to be inherent in human nature, can be actually realized only by those who can rise above their environment. The final appeal is to prophets and seers. Goodness is a reflected light which shines only upon pure souls

Kant made a great effort to place ethics upon a rational foundation. But his doctrine of *a priori* categorical imperative is essentially not different from the traditional Platonic view of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful—the view that regards this famous trinity of ethics and aesthetics as absolute values in themselves which transcend the limitations of phenomenal beings, namely, space, time, and causality. The world of moral law and freedom of will could not hang in the air. It must be referred back to something. This was realized by moral philosophers of the Kantian school. Jacobi, for example, admitted that the final appeal must be to a super-personal principle. The core of the 'rationalist' metaphysical moral philosophy can be stated as follows: The end of philosophy is to know that we must believe. The Kantian school actually did come to this conclusion. The ultimate basis of moral philosophy is thus exposed as the belief in a transcendental world of abstract values. In other words, the conception of the metaphysical 'moral order' is but a variation of the conception of the teleological order.

The whole structure of moral philosophy collapses in consequence of the discovery that absolute truth is a fiction—an empty concept. This revolutionary discovery is made in the revealing light of modern scientific knowledge. Marxism is its philosophical outcome.

The structure was a castle built in the air. Moral values are not absolute; they are relative. What is good for one may not be good for another. Indeed, it may, it often is, positively bad for others. Their validity is temporally variable also. What is good for today may not be good tomorrow. All the concepts of moral philosophy are equally relative. The notion of 'values-in-themselves' is even more bizarre than the notion of 'things-in-themselves'. By undermining the religious and metaphysical foundation of this notion, science revolutionizes moral philosophy which apparently does not seem to have any bearing upon the facts and events of the physical world.

Humanism represents an ineffective effort to overthrow the tyranny of dogmas, claiming supernatural sanction. To end that tyranny, exercised through moral philosophy as well as religion, supernatural fictions must be replaced by the objective, empirical, verifiable truths of nature as the guides to human behaviour; as standards of human conduct. Humanism does not do this. It disputes supernatural authority, but places the abstract 'man' above nature. The situation is hardly improved when the fiction of God is replaced by the fantasy of the abstract conception of man divorced from the special, temporal, historical, and social environment which makes man what really he is, in each given period of history, or even in each given moment of individual life. Human nature as something eternal, unchangeable, essentially or instinctively good, has no more objective reality than the immortal soul, divine will, or the metaphysical 'moral order'.

Man can throw off the tyranny of the supernatural, of the mysteries of the metaphysical, only with the power derived from the knowledge that he is a part of the physical world. To be philosophically effective, Humanism must be naturalistic, not ethical. Man, with all his mental, emotional, and spiritual make-up, being an integral part of the physical Universe, human nature is changeable as all other aspects of nature. Therefore, the mystic conception of eternal and unchangeable human nature cannot serve as the final standard of value which must also change. The slightest critical acquaintance with the history of social evolution compels the rejection of the notion that human nature is unchangeable.

Moral standards change from time to time, from place to place according to the physical environments and social conditions in which man lives. Man is a social animal; his nature is determined by whatever he does, or is compelled to do, for the maintenance and welfare of the social aggregate. Human society is not a static organization. It grows and changes. The means and modes of its existence and conditions for the promotion of collective welfare change, influencing man's moral outlook accordingly. Man has no individual being outside and independent of his social relations. He realizes his individuality as a member of the aggregate. The collective does not bear the stamp of individuals composing it. On the contrary, the individual is determined by the conditions of the society in which he lives. Man is the sum total of historical and social experience. Moral philosophy, in the last analysis, is social philosophy. Moral codes are determined by social necessities. The standard of values is the welfare of the aggregate.

Moral philosophy refers its precepts and principles to abstract, mystic, metaphysical concepts such as goodness-in-itself, when it is actuated, consciously or not, by the concern for the maintenance of an established social order based upon sectional interest which militates against the welfare of the entire community. The sanction for an immoral social order is found in the imaginary 'moral order' which, in its turn, is ultimately interpreted as the expression of the divine will. An immutable absolute 'Moral order' presupposes the teleological order: The world is so, because it could not be otherwise, being the product of providential design.

Marxism separates morality from all this mystic, metaphysical context. It enables men to behave morally not under compulsion, but by his own choice and voluntary submission to the laws made for the welfare of the entire community. The fundamental principle of Marxian ethics can be stated in the words of Epicurus who exclamied: 'I want to be free from the tyranny of the Gods, so that I could be virtuous because it gives me pleasure to be virtuous.'

Selections from FASCISM: Its Philosophy, Professions and Practice

I The Philosophy of Fascism
II The Cult of Superman
V National Socialism
VII The Practice of Fascism

Introductory editorial note

The first edition of *Fascism* was published in March 1938 by D. M. Library, Calcutta. It consisted of seven chapters: I. The Philosophy of Fascism; II. The Foundation of Fascist Philosophy; III. The Cult of Superman; IV. Under the Sign of the Swastika; V. National Socialism; VI. The 'Bloodless' Revolution; VII. The Practice of Fascism. Chapters I, III, V, and VII have been selected and included in this volume of the *Selected Works*. Where, in consideration of space, I have deleted any sentence or passage, this has been indicated by an ellipsis.

The first drafts of different chapters of the book have been traced to Volumes 3, 4, and 5 of the Prison Manuscripts. The original text was therefore written between 1933 and 1935. Before publication the draft was slightly edited by Roy, and updated to the middle of 1936.

The Fascist Party was founded in Italy in March 1919 under the leadership of Benito Mussolini (1883–1945). Fascism combined extreme nationalism with militarism and was totally opposed to liberal democratic principles and practices. Mussolini equipped his 'battalions of combat' (*fasci di Combattimento*) with clubs and firearms; they systematically attacked socialists, destroyed the printing presses of newspapers critical of the Party, and gained forcible control of Milan and several other towns. In October 1922, Mussolini with his Fascist battalions marched into Rome, meeting virtually no effective resistance, and was declared Premier of Italy by the frightened King. His political support came from the middle-classes and financial support from big landowners and industrialists.

Although his party was only a minority (35 out of 535 seats) in the Chamber of Deputies after the national elections of 1921, Mussolini managed to force the Chamber to grant him special powers, placed Fascists in key positions, and used his battalions to drive all opposition parties underground. In 1925 all opposition newspapers were suppressed, non-Fascist trade unions were broken up, and by 1927 Mussolini established himself as the absolute master of Italy. In 1929 the Pope provided legitimacy to Mussolini's totalitarian rule. In return, Mussolini declared Roman Catholicism as the 'sole religion of the State'.

As Il Duce (The Leader) of Fascism and Italy Mussolini, with the aid of the philosopher Giovanni Gentile, contributed a brief but authoritative statement of his ideology entitled '*The* Doctrine of Fascism' to the *Italian Encyclopedia* (1932; translated into English by Michael Oakeshott and published by Cambridge University Press, 1939). Gentile himself published a fuller statement in his *Origini e dottrina del fascismo* (Rome, 1929). Among informative and analytical writings on the subject which were published in the thirties may be mentioned Historikus, *Der*

Faschismus als Massenbewegung (Karlsbad, 1934); R. Palme Dutt, *Fascism and Social Revolution* (New York, 1934); G. A. Borgese, *Goliath: The March of Fascism* (New York, 1938); E. B. Ashton, *The Fascist: His State and his Mind* (London, 1937); Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, (New York, 1941).

The doctrine propounded by Mussolini was much more effectively and ruthlessly put into practice by Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) and the Nazis in Germany in the thirties. The term Fascism came to denote both the Italian and the German varieties; it stood for an ideology of totalitarian dictatorship advocating the absolute power of the State and complete negation of individual freedom, proclaimed violence and war to be indispensable and legitimate means of gaining power and national glory, and drew nourishment from fear, hatred, fanaticism, and other irrational elements of the human psyche. It claimed for the Leader infallibility and omnipotence, and for the Party unbounded control over the Nation.

Roy had seen the triumph of Fascism in Italy and how not only liberals but also socialists and communists were liquidated in that country. He considered the line adopted by the Comintern at its Sixth Congress to be suicidal, and from 1929 began publicly advocating in the Communist Opposition periodicals a United Front of Communists and Socialists against the Fascist–Nazis (see *Selected Works, Vol. III*). Before he left Europe for India towards the end of 1930 he also saw the rise of Hitler and the National Socialists, who had won 107 seats in the Reichstag, in Germany. In 1933 the Weimar Constitution was suspended and Hitler was granted dictatorial powers. All political parties other than the Nazis were outlawed; in 1934 Hitler proclaimed himself Der Fuehrer and his government the Third Reich.

Fascism was Roy's response to these developments in Europe, news of which reached him behind prison bars. He noted that Fascism was not a uniquely European phenomenon, but that many of its elements existed in Indian tradition, society, and politics. He was glad when the Comintern at its Seventh Congress reversed the earlier line and adopted the United Front as its new line. What, however, he did not notice at this stage but realized in the late forties was that the theory and practice of totalitarian dictatorship which he opposed, included not only Fascism–Nazism but also Bolshevism or Soviet Communism.

Also see Konrad Heiden, *Der Fuehrer:Hitler's Rise to Power*, Boston 1944; William Ebenstein, *The Nazi State*, New York, 1943; Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, New York, 1946.

SNR.

I The Philosophy of Fascism

Fascism is a comparatively new socio–political phenomenon. It first appeared in Italy in 1919. Since then, it has spread in all the countries of Europe, having triumphed completely in several of them. Its sudden appearance and spectacular progress naturally made it the outstanding topic of the day. Brutalities committed by it shocked the entire progressive and freedom-loving world. Much has been written either for or against it. Though not wanting apologists and panegyrists, Fascism, however, has been condemned as a politically retrograde and socially reactionary movement. It has been characterized as the violent effort to bolster up decayed capitalism. Its growth has been traced to the conditions of chaos created by the ruinous consequences of the Great War. Plausible explanations have been offered for its success in Germany.

But with all that, the enquiry into this monstrosity of our time has not yet been sufficiently penetrating. Historically, it is not a post-war growth. Such a sweeping socio–political movement cannot happen all of a sudden. The Fascist ideology is the logical consequence of the development of philosophical thought taking place over a sufficiently long period of history. If Fascism is a socio–political reaction, its ideological foundation must have been laid by philosophical reaction. It has been said that Fascism has no philosophy. This is an erroneous idea which prevents proper understanding of the phenomenon. Fascism has a definite philosophy which grew over a long period, precedent to its appearance as a socio–political phenomenon, in opposition to the modern scientific philosophy which provided the ideology to the revolutionary social and political movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. . . .

Violating all the temporal standards of morality, justice and freedom, Fascism claims divine sanctions. The official philosopher of Italian Fascism, Giovanni Gentile, was the first to advance that claim. He writes: 'Human being is naturally religious. To think means to contemplate God. The more one thinks, the more one feels oneself in the presence of God. As against man, God is everything. Man is nothing [*Fascism and Culture*].' In order to justify political reaction and social barbarism, the philosopher of Fascism turns his back upon one of the fundamental principles of modern European culture, namely, Humanism.

Man had to free himself from divine tutelage before he could take up the struggle for temporal freedom. In order to deprive him of the hard-earned political freedom and civil liberties, it is necessary to defraud him of the spiritual liberation inherited from the day of the Renaissance.

The super-religious self-effacement of man preached by the philosophy of Fascism is the expression of vulgar materialism which rises in revolt against the revolutionary doctrines of philosophical Materialism. The mortal man professing the Fascist faith, vicariously drowns himself in the all-embracing being of the divinity only to resurrect as an instrument of the Almighty, his will and action free from all the laws of this world. In order that acts of barbarism and violence could be justified, as committed in pursuance of a divine purpose pervading the Universe, the process of thinking which engineers such acts is hypocritically visualized as the 'contemplation of God'. These acts are divinely inspired. God takes decayed and distressed Capitalism under his protection, and each fanatical defender of this worn out system of vulgar materialism becomes an inspired, divine instrument. Through this sly stratagem off self-effacement, he retains to himself unbounded freedom of will which is denied to others. The Fascist is the Superman. . . .

Drawing inspiration from the Hegelian theory of State, Gentile discovers metaphysical sanctions for the Fascist dictatorship. 'The Fascist State embraces and includes all spiritual values including religion. . . . The State, which tolerates any other sovereign power, commits suicide. Whatever is spiritual is free, but within the great limits of the powers of the State which itself is spiritual [*Fascism and Culture*]. The practice of Fascism, to be described in another chapter, shows for what vulgar materialistic purposes the divinely derived power of the spiritual Fascist dictatorship is wielded.

The bourgeoisie, defending their waning power with the bloody instrument of Fascist dictatorship, advances the claim to inherit the 'divine right of kings'. The kings may be things of the past, but as long as the prerogative of divine sanction remains reserved to the State, conceived abstractly according to the metaphysical Hegelian doctrine, it can be claimed, logically if not legitimately, by the class which controls the State. The mediaeval dictum—'The King can do no wrong'—is stretched by the philosophers of Fascism to the new dictum—'The State can do no wrong'.

Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the roots of the philosophy of Fascism can be traced in the divine philosophy of the *Gita*, according to which all powers (*bibhutis*) on earth are the powers of God. Thus, philosophically, Fascism is not a new phenomenon; nor is it correct to say that Fascism has no philosophy. Fascist philosophy is the logical outcome of the spiritualist view of life. The logical connection between the doctrine preached in the *Gita* and the Fascist neo-Hegelian metaphysical conception of the State, is easily perceived. As a matter of fact, the philosophy of Fascist dictatorship results directly from the modern schools of mysticism and spiritualism which represent reaction against the scientific view of life. Its Indian ancestry can be traced through

Schopenhauer whose disciple, Nietzsche, was the father of the philosophy of Fascism.

Before proceeding to trace its geneology, let us make a little closer acquaintance of this monstrous manifestation of spiritualist extravagance. 'The Fascist movement is actuated by a deep spiritual motive. The doctrine of Fascism is its action. It is not a closed system of ideology. It is a new form of thought, a new method of living. The characteristic of Fascism is its religious sentiments [Giovanni Gentile, *Fascism and Culture*].' The motive of Fascism has been clearly manifested by its action, which, according to its philosopher, summarizes its doctrine.

The Fascist movement unites the disillusioned petty-bourgeois masses in a fanatical army, demagogically led in the paradoxical crusade for galvanizing the chains of their own slavery. The Fascist movement suppresses with violence the revolt of the slaves of Capitalism, and to perform that inglorious role, it is patronized by the reactionary bourgeoisie which helps it to assume dictatorial powers. The 'deep-rooted spiritual motive' of Fascism is evidenced by countless acts of violence, committed over a number of years, all for the sacred cause of saving Capitalism, which is vulgar materialism in practice. How are such actions compatible with the 'deep-rooted spiritual motive'? The philosopher of Fascism gives the answer: Fascism has *no principle*. It is not encumbered with a logical system of ideology. Spiritualism knows no reason; logic has no place in it. The spiritualist character of Fascism finds expression in its arbitrariness. Expediency—or capitalist domination—is the only law for this mad manifestation of spiritualism. It does not want to encumber itself with the ballast of really philosophical theories and rational principles. It wishes to keep its hand free to wield any weapon in its bloody crusade against forces making for the liberation of society from the vulgar materialism of the capitalist civilization. The doctrine of an inscrutable divine will, of religious experience, of spiritual motive, of religious sentiment, comes very handy for justifying the unbounded arbitrariness of temporal power, as simply doing the bidding of a supernatural purpose which knows no law—for which man-made laws have no validity.

Yet, according to Gentile, Fascism is the avowed enemy of 'every form and system of abstract, rationalist, irreligious thought, even of unnatural liberalism, and substantially materialistic freemasonry'. Here we find spiritualism standing out naked in its true significance. Fascism is religious; therefore it declares rationalism to be a danger and liberalism unnatural. It is against philosophical materialism because that is the antithesis of the practice of vulgar materialism. It is a defender of religion because faith places premium on ignorance, which makes the masses easy of exploitation.

III The Cult of Superman

The most characteristic feature of the philosophy of Fascism is the cult of Superman. The father of the cult is Nietzsche, who was a disciple of Schopenhauer; and Schopenhauer found 'consolation in the philosophy of the Upanishads'. So there is a close kinship between the crassest manifestation of vulgar materialism and the spiritualist ideology of the orthodox Indian nationalism. Fascism is nationalism inspired by revivalist ideals. The practice of Fascism shows where revivalism leads to. Its ideological background, on the other hand, reveals that revivalism is the spirit of social reaction; it is an ideological instrument for fighting progress which presupposes revolution.

The grandfather of Fascism, Schopenhauer, was a prophet of pessimism. Schopenhauer's philosophy was the ideology of the German bourgeoisie defeated in the revolution of 1848. Defeat generated pessimism which was expressed in the longing to run away from the rude realities of life.

According to Schopenhauer, unchangeable, immutable laws of nature condemn man to a life on the worst possible world. Since the intolerable conditions of life cannot be changed, the desire to run away from the world full of those conditions is irresistible. Naturally, the tormented soul of Schopenhauer, which was the personification of the despondence of the defeated German bourgeoisie, found consolation in the philosophy of the Upanishads—a philosophy which for ages prevented the Indian people from facing the realities of life with the courage to change them. The essence of Schopenhauer's philosophy is the debasement of human will which is declared to be 'thoroughly evil and mean'. The implication of this philosophy is a negative attitude to all progress, since the objective forces of progress find their subjective expression in the will of man. With this doctrine, Schopenhauer stands exactly on the same ground as the Hindu philosophy, which also declares desire to be the impediment to self-realization—the fountainhead of true knowledge. . . . So thoroughgoing reactionary was Schopenhauer's philosophy, that even the hateful anti-semitism and the mediaeval attitude towards women of the Fascists can be traced to his credit.

Nietzsche improved upon his master, and in substance proclaimed that human will need not be ashamed of its native character of 'evilness and meanness'. Since it is evil and mean, let it be openly so, and be proud of it. Schopenhauer had called life a crime. Nietzsche defined it as the expression of 'possessiveness, harshness, cruelty, of the desire to overwhelm the stranger and the weak, to oppress and exploit'. Here are the fundamental features of Fascism. . . .

Life is an ephemeral phenomenon; so, let us make the most of it. Even this cynical view of life as a merry-go-round in which everybody is for himself, letting the devil take the hindmost, can be given a spiritualist twist, if we adopt the Hindu standard: Life is not overwhelming me, I am its master. The spiritual guide of the modern Indian intellectual, Vivekananda, echoed Nietzsche when he vaingloriously declared: 'If I drink wine, I don't let the wine drink me.' He may not have learned from the cynical philosopher of European reaction, because his holy master had taught the lesson. In his quaint language, Ramakrishna preached: 'One eating pork can have his mind fixed upon God, whereas another living on *habishya* may be the slave of *Kamini–Kanchan*.' That is to say, with a spiritualist prejudice or pretence, one is entitled to live a life of vulgar materialism. This teaching of a twentieth century avatar is not different from the cynicism of Nietzsche. Indeed, the whole body of Ramakrishna's teachings, rationalized by Vivekananda, is tuned in this trend which fully reflects the spirit of Hinduism.

Nietzsche's philosophy of capitalism follows the Indian way. Inasmuch as you retain the spiritualist view that life is a crime, that human will is evil and mean, you may indulge in this crime, as much as you like, without polluting your spiritual self; as long as you remain the master of your will, its evilness and meanness do not contaminate the purity of your essential being. Then you can do anything you like—give free rein to the possessiveness of life, to the desire to oppress, overwhelm and hurt the weak; you can do all this with a clear conscience, morally; since the world by its very nature is the worst possible, it cannot be made any worse. Nietzsche made these inferences quite logically from the Upanishadic philosophy of Schopenhauer. Out of the negation of the will to life, there emerged the will to power. Sympathy for the sorrows and sufferings of life was transformed into a contempt for them. Thus developed the cult of superman who was recognized in the captains of the rising modern industry.

The supermen are 'free spirits', 'good Europeans'—Teutonic saviours of the world, proud custodians of the 'spiritual Aryan culture', appearing with the civilizing mission of sharing with the Briton 'the white man's burden'. The immediate political expression of Nietzsche's philosophy was the demand of German Imperialism for a 'place in the sun'—that is, colonial expansion. Fascism is the crassest manifestation of the same philosophy of power and predatoriness. The Nietzschean cult of superman—this fundamental dogma of the philosophy of Fascism—has been correctly characterized as 'the philosophy which objectively glorified big capital and as such appealed to the public'. (Mehring, *On the History of Philosophy*).

That is how an ideology for German Imperialism, and subsequently for Fascism, was constructed out of the sublime philosophy of the Upanishads. Neither was it vulgarized nor was it abused. The justification of arbitrary power on earth always follows logically from the assumption of a metaphysical First Principle which knows no law.. Indian philosophy based on this assumption will also become the ideology of vulgar materialism as soon as the relation of classes is so readjusted as to equip the bourgeoisie with the necessary weapons of coercion. In fact, our blessed spiritualist philosophy has never done anything but to serve the interests of the upper classes. Only it must change its form and terminology in accordance with the social composition of the ruling class of a given period. Even today, the divine doctrines of 'truth and non-violence' are serving the purpose of arresting the forces of social discontent and political revolt. The taste of a little power, granted by the grace of Imperialism, is driving our spiritually minded nationalists towards Fascist practices.

The 'free-spirits' of Nietzsche are endowed with the '*bibhutis*' of God. Therefore, they are naturally destined to be 'rulers and subjugators'; they have the natural 'right to rule and subjugate the human herd', which is 'condemned to powerlessness and to be treated unjustly'. This revolting view of human relations, derived logically from Schopenhauer's doctrine of the innate evilness and meanness of man, made Nietzsche a rabid anti-Socialist. Thus, he appears in history as the immediate ideological herald of the Fascist crusade against Marxism.

It is one of the cardinal principles of the Indo–Aryan spiritualist view of life that one should bear cheerfully and with resignation all the sorrows and sufferings of life. Nietzsche was a firm believer of this principle, and therefore could declare that the real improvement of the conditions of the workers would be brought about by teaching them to suffer cheerfully. One could easily see that Nietzsche's anti-Socialist propaganda was a shadow of Gandhism cast ahead. So, if Gandhism is to be regarded as a body of religio–ethical doctrines—the quintessence of ancient Indian culture, then the world has already experienced its modern political expression. Gandhism as a philosophical tradition has led to Hitlerism. Let the Indian nationalists take note of this fact. The logic of history cannot be any less binding in India than in Germany.

The spiritual father of Fascism held that what was intolerable for the rich could be borne by the poor; therefore, he was of the opinion that the workers could be easily taught to practise the virtue of suffering. According to Gandhism the capitalists as well as the workers are children of God; and the poor should not envy their rich brothers. Gandhism glorifies sacrifice and suffering as great virtues. If this dogma is admitted, every measure to enforce the practice of these virtues should be regarded legitimate, morally as well as logically. What is the use of having an ideal if one is not prepared to sacrifice everything for its realization? Gandhists, entrusted with the administration of the Imperialist State, are showing that if necessary they would be prepared to take all measures for enforcing the practice of those virtues which, according to their perverse philosophy, would make better men out of the Indians.

Nietzsche's philosophy, justifying crass class domination, bears striking resemblance to the Hindu doctrine of karma and, indeed, is an echo of the voice of God himself: 'The four castes are created by me, according to quality and merit [*Gita*].' The caste system places different groups of people in different social stations. If that system is providentially ordained, those belonging to lower stations must be reconciled for ever to their positions. Social inequality is thus perpetuated on the authority of divine will. The slave must be slave for ever: The ruling class enjoys its power and privileges as gifts of God which only the sinful can ever dare to take away from it. . . .

Having condemned the 'human herd' to powerlessness and subjugation, Nietzsche could have no patience for them. He exclaimed: 'Happiness on this earth will never be increased through the change of institutions; it will be realized through the disappearance of the melancholic, weak, grovelling, complaining temperament.' Again an echo of the spiritual voice of India—this philosophy of Fascism: earthly things cannot make man really happy; happiness is a state of mind, independent of the outside world. It is all a mater of temperament. One can be happy by the very simple means of imagining himself happy.

Spiritual culture has taught the Indian masses to point out the difference in the size of the five fingers of the same hand when their attention is drawn to the social inequity and inequality to which they are subjected. They have been taught to accept their position as befitting their merit. They have not only been taught to be reconciled to their hard lot, but to look upon the established social order as an expression of divine dispensation. Nietzsche also argued that 'there being much hard and rough work to be done, some people must be held down in conditions that make them fit for this sort of work'. The entire caste system—that creation of the special genius of India—was based on this principle. The philosopher of Fascism was inspired by the Aryan spirit of caste when he suggested that 'masses of Asiatic and African barbarians could be imported so that the uncivilized world might constantly be at the service of the civilized'. Why not? Did not the Aryan Brahmans, with the help of their warrior allies, condemn the bulk of the aboriginal population of India to the perpetual servitude of the *Sudra*? . . .

Nietzsche places the 'free-spirits' above the moral concept of bad and good, because, ever since the early days of Christianity, these have been the weapon of the 'human herd' in their revolt against the 'free-spirits'. His work on superman morality has become the bible of Fascism. Here are some characteristic passages:

> Religion is a weapon in the hand of the strong, the free, who are prepared and destined to rule, in whom intelligence and art combine to produce a ruling

> race. For them, religion is a weapon to overcome resistance to be able to rule. Religion binds the subjugated to the rulers, stifles in the former the hidden, inner conscience which would induce them to disobey the rulers.

It always has evil consequences

> when religion seeks to assume sovereign power—tries to be the end in itself instead of being a means among other means, a means of breeding and rearing in the hands of philosophers. . . . The essential quality of a good and healthy aristocracy is that it can accept with clear conscience the offer of a mass of men who, in its interest, must be oppressed and reduced below the human level, to slavery, to mere instruments of labour. Egoism is the nature of superior souls. By egoism I mean that firm belief that others must naturally be subjected to, sacrifice themselves for, beings like ourselves. This sort of egoism belongs as a matter of course, to superior souls. In it, there is no feeling of harshness, coercion or arbitrariness. It is rather the basic law of things. Should I look for a name for it, I would call it Righteousness. [Nietzshe, *Beyond Good and Evil*].

. . . The philosophic–moral sanction for arbitrary power and unbounded will provides the basis for the cult of superman—a cult that necessarily breeds brutality, violence, coercion, oppression; in short, all the attributes of Fascism. A Mussolini or a Hitler is the personification of the cult of superman. As a superman, he represents the spiritual will and, in worldly matters, is not bound by the human concepts of freedom, right, justice, morality. Therefore, the 'saviour' or the 'regenerator' of the world brazenly proclaims that freedom is not a necessary element of citizenship; the individual citizen enjoys real freedom in the absolute power, that is, arbitrariness, of the State; and the superman is the Octopus personified. The modern dictator at the service of the bourgeoisie declares '*L' État*, c'est moi', imitating the feudal dictator of the past; and he even lays claim to the divine right.

According to Hitler, the State is everything and the individual citizen has no right to exist except as a pawn of the absolute power which may gamble away his life whenever it pleases. This mediaeval spiritualist political philosophy of absolute power logically leads to the irresponsible war propaganda of the Fascists. The vanity or vagary of the absolute ruler may any time call upon the people to sacrifice themselves on the bloody shrine of the Moloch. They must do so out of loyalty to the State, or as patriotic duty, irrespective of whether it has any real bearing upon national interest or not. This practical implication of the Fascist political philosophy is stated with brutal frankness by von Papen—the man who convinced the German bourgeoisie that Hitler should be placed in power. 'The function of woman is to bear children to be soldiers. There is no more glorious ideal of life than to die on the field of battle.'

The 'National Socialism' of Hitler is the gruesome ghost of mediaeval Prussianism: and Prussianism represented what is still glorified in India as the laudable *Kshatriya* virtue. This virtue was preached to the masses when they lived in serfdom. Chattel of the feudal lord, either Indian or Prussian, they had to leave the plough to bear the sword. Since this alteration of professions was never determined by their own will, but according to the interests of the lord (in those days, robbery was often more lucrative than peaceful toil on the land), *Kshatriya* virtue had to be inculcated in the people. The idea of death on the field of battle was glorified in the epics, and preached through mythological legends. As a matter of fact, the epics were written to manufacture the vicarious spirit of heroism in the people; and the practical value of *Kashatriya* heroism, just as of Prussian nationalism, was the aggrandizement of the feudal lord.

'Let it be written on our epitaph: we have been hard; we have been ruthless; but we have been good Germans [Hitler].' The cult of superman enabled another hero of Hitlerism to cry cynically: 'The State must have the courage to break its own laws [Goebbels].' The moral sanction for such arbitrary, absolutely unrestricted, power on earth can be derived only from the pseudo-philosophical conception of a supernatural spiritual force, of an absolute divine will, which is not bound by the laws of nature, yet is the sovereign principle of power governing the destiny of man. That is the philosophy of Fascism, the quintessence of which is the cult of superman. It is a philosophy which bears a striking resemblance to the Indian spiritualism of the Vedanta school as well as of the dualist system which visualizes the world as the *leela* of the Almighty. On the strength of this kinship, the ideologists of German Fascism—Spengler, Spann, Keyserling, etc.—hail the spiritual message of the East as the saviour of the West.

The philosophy of Fascism is essentially identical with Indian spiritualism. If Fascism can ever save the capitalist civilization, the spirit of India may claim a reflected glory. But that would not be curing the world of Materialism. That would be helping vulgar materialism continue holding humanity subjected to its domination. Can we be proud of a philosophy which may bring us such a glory? Will not that glory rather make us ashamed of having cherished a false ideal through all these ages? These are pertinent questions, to be seriously thought over by those Indian nationalists who can think, who are not simply swayed by a prejudice, or who are not conscious reactionaries—potential Fascists—themselves.

V National Socialism

In Germany, Fascism has taken the deceptive and demagogic title of National Socialism. In Practice, it is neither Socialist nor Nationalist. Politically, it is the administration of the capitalist society in the period of decay. In Germany, Fascist dictatorship has been committing acts of greater violence and brutality than even in Italy, because since its victory in the latter country, capitalism decayed still farther driving its defender to the frenzy of despair.

The Fascist state is the instrument of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie divested of the deceit of parliamentary democracy. The sole function of the Fascist movement and Fascist state is to suppress with brutal and bloody violence the working class and the associated social elements engaged in the task of building a higher civilization on the ruins of the capitalist order. The tragic aspect of Fascism is that, as a movement, it is composed largely of the lower middle class ruined by the capitalist system; it is the paradoxical phenomenon of the victims of rapacious capitalism fanatically and furiously engaged in the thankless task of saving the cause of their own ruin. Such a movement can naturally have no room for truthfulness, honesty, sincerity, not even the commonest decency. Necessarily, it is based upon lie, deceit, and humbug. Hitler's autobiography has been characterized as a book of hundred and forty thousand words which contains [a] hundred and thirty nine thousand mistakes (Lion Feuchtwanger). This great German writer had to leave Hitler's Germany, his works having been burned as containing un-German ideas. Indeed, demagogy is the main weapon of Fascism.

The more backward, and for that reason the most abject, victims of capitalist rapacity were mobilized in the Fascist movement through a fraudulent agitation against capitalism. Under the banner of pseudo-Socialism, they were marshalled as the storm-troops for the defence of capitalism in distress. That miracle could not be performed except through unrestricted indulgence in brazen lies, shameless deceit, and extravagant demagogy. The agitation, ostensibly against capitalism, was in reality directed against the political, civic, and cultural freedom, historically associated with bourgeois democracy—the political order established by capitalism when it operates as a progressive social force. Parliamentary democracy was identified with capitalism and its abolition was prescribed as the only cure for all the evils of the capitalist society. Parliamentary democracy has been destroyed by Fascism. But capitalism still remains with greater power than ever, and exploiting the working class more brutally. Indeed, in these days of revolutionary upheaval, the abolition of parliamentary democracy provides additional guarantee for the maintenance of capitalist domination.

The relative freedom granted by the parliamentary regime enables the working class to organize and otherwise prepare itself for the struggle to overthrow Capitalism and establish Socialism. Therefore, the abolition of their own achievements becomes necessary for the bourgeoisie in the struggle for defending their power and privileges. The Fascist movement is created to do that dirty job for Capitalism. Bourgeois philosophers lay the ideological foundation of the movement. It is liberally subsidized by the financial and industrial magnates against whom it vituperates in the beginning. The bourgeois–democratic State tolerates, indeed, surreptitiously aids and abets the movement which openly calls for its destruction. The police and military forces of the bourgeois–democratic State secretly form alliance with the movement for the overthrow of the Government. Artful demagogy, cheap sentimentality, extravagant promises (never meant to be kept), unscrupulous slander against the opponents, fomentation of national jingoism, fanning of race prejudice—all these and many similar means are employed to hypnotize the economically ruined and intellectually bankrupt lower middle-class masses. The demos is turned against democracy. Fascist dictatorship is established through a theatrical *coup d'état* as in Italy, or 'constitutionally' and 'bloodlessly' as in Germany.

The bankers and industrial magnates, who financed the agitation to whip up the ruined petty-bourgeois masses into a nationalist frenzy, had made immense profit out of Germany's defeat and disgrace. They had forced the Republican Government into the orgy of inflation of 1923–4 so as to wipe out the huge internal indebtedness contracted during the war. Patriotism left the petty-bourgeoisie in utter bankruptcy. Had not the internal indebtedness been liquidated so fraudulently, its service would have compelled the Government to tax higher incomes heavily. In order to absolve the war-profiteers from just taxation, the Government simply confiscated the billions of hard-earned savings that the middle class had invested in war bonds as patriotic duty. That confiscation ruined them, and laid the social foundation of the National–Socialist movement. Eventually, the scions of the ruined middle-class donned the brown shirt with the mystic sign of Swastika and placed themselves at the service of those who had robbed and expropriated their class.

The fat capitalists, grown fatter through war-profiteering, having evaded taxation with the aid and connivance of the Republican Government, the entire economic burden of the Versailles Treaty fell upon the producing masses. The consequence was progressive pauperization of the bulk of the population, while a small upper stratum grew richer and richer. Due to impoverishment, the taxable capacity of the masses had declined. State finances were thrown entirely out of balance. For years the German Government was bankrupt. The current expenditure of the State could be reduced by cutting down the budget of social services and pensions for the demobilized and disabled soldiers. But there was the war indemnity to be paid. The demand of the victorious powers could be met only by dipping into the pockets of those who had made money out of the war and had evaded the responsibility of defeat by expropriating the lower middle-class. In that situation, the cry of the National Socialist movement, financed by those who had money, that the Treaty of Versailles was ruining Germany, was bound to be very popular. The Republican Government had signed that treaty and was trying to meet the demands made under it; therefore, it was the enemy of the German people. It must be overthrown. The 'National Revolution' was to begin with a counter-revolution.

The economic ruin of the working class as well as of the lower middle-class had created an acute revolutionary situation in Germany. The masses would not tolerate any further burden. But the upper classes were equally unwilling to disgorge any part of their ill-gotten wealth. Germany was caught between the spectre of revolution at home, and the threat of military intervention from abroad. The National Socialist movement was created by the ruling classes as the guarantee against both the dangers. The fraudulent talk of Socialism would deceive the more backward section of the working-class; on the other hand, national jingoism might organize an effective resistance to the enforcement of the Versailles Treaty.

Having destroyed the democratic State, the 'National Revolution' did not do any harm to capitalism which had been one of the targets of the National Socialists before they were placed in power. The first act of the Nazi state was suppression of the working-class parties, which act, for the time being, created the guarantee against the danger of revolution. Having done that, it recklessly launched upon the career of national jingoism, not to protect the welfare of the German people, but to free the industrial magnates from the obligations of the Versailles Treaty. If the victorious powers were to collect the indemnity, it could come only from those who were in the position to pay. The masses of the German people had been bled to the last drop. The freedom from the 'dictation of Versailles' could be possibly had only through the show of a military resistance, should the allies try to press their claim. That would appear to be a mad adventure, which, however, proved to be successful because the allied powers had learned from experience that military intervention was not a paying proposition. In any case, they were also afraid of the spectre of revolution in Germany. Consequently, Nazi jingoism had free reins. Instead of doing any harm to the capitalists, the jingoism of the National Socialist movement actually helped them out of the economic crisis. The programme of rearmament to vindicate national honour meant an industrial boom, the profit of which went to the capitalists. With an empty coffer, even the miracle-mongering Messiah could not possibly foot the bills of the rearmament programme. Industrialists and financiers granted *their new* Government credit for the orders for arms and ammunitions. The National Socialist State was thus mortgaged to them. No talk of Socialism could be allowed in that situation. Hitlerism shook off the pseudo-socialist pretensions of its earlier days, while its nationalism became the instrument of new German Imperialism.

National Socialism is a misnomer as well as a contradiction in terms. Socialism knows no boundary. It is incompatible with Nationalism. Much less can it be associated with the jingoist, imperialist, nationalism of Fascists. National Socialism is a fraudulent label put on a bitterly anti-socialist, anti-working-class movement. . . . Even before it came to power, the main occupation of Fascism was to terrorize the working class by all sorts of violence, and all its terrorist activities were financed exactly by those who ought to be the most afraid of Socialism. In power, the first and foremost act of Fascism has been to suppress with bloody brutality not only the Communist parties, but also the anti-revolutionary Social-Democratic parties, and even trade unions of the most reformist sort. Its heavy hand fell mercilessly also on the liberal intellectuals who supported and sympathized with the working class.

To spiritualize capitalism is one of the blatant humbugs of the National Socialist programme. To catch the imagination of the destitute lower middle-class and the backward workers, the National Socialist movement indulged in anti-capitalist demagogy. Having suppressed all the forces directly or indirectly hostile to capitalism, the Nazis declared the completion of the National Revolution.

There should be not the slightest encroachment on the privileges of Capitalism, while its political power would be exercised through the Nazi dictatorship. To justify that shameless betrayal of the deluded multitude, Fascist theoreticians discovered two categories of Capitalism—'exploiting' and 'constructive'. The former was to be suppressed, while the latter protected and encouraged. . . . Such stalwarts of capitalist exploitation as Krupp von Bohlen (with his gigantic munition plants), Thyssen (with his extensive iron and steel industries), Vogler (with his kingdom of coal) are recognized as representatives of 'constructive capital', and as such are counted as stout pillars of the spiritual Fascist State. As a matter of fact, big industrial and economic interests are placed beyond the control of the totalitarian State—that octopus which has driven its bloody tentacles into every other department of the national life of Germany. The National Economic Council, composed of the big industrial magnates, with Krupp von Bohlen as the Chairman, functions as a sort of Super-State.

Under this novel Socialism, 'freedom is not a requisite and liberty is not essential to the individual citizen'. Thus spake the modern Zarathustra—Hitler. The National Socialist Party has become the sole party of the German bourgeoisie, and the Nazi State is the trustworthy custodian of German Capitalism.

The social complection and political purpose of National Socialism threw off the veil of demagogy and deception when the packed parliament of Hitler in March 1933 assembled at the tomb of Frederick the Great to bury the Republic and resurrect the ghost of reactionary feudal militarism. In the monarchist atmosphere of Potsdam, surrounded by the paraphernalia of blatant reaction, Hitler forgot his dupes—the bankrupt middle-class and backward workers. In his speech to the Nazi parliament, asking for dictatorial power, he waxed eloquent about the virtues of the Hohenzollern dynasty, the decadent scions of which, present in the ceremony, thus felt that they had not donned the sign of Swastika for nothing. Hitler assumed dictatorial power not as the 'saviour of the German people', but as the instrument of all the forces that had exploited and oppressed them for centuries.

On the other hand, having brutally suppressed the Communist Party and dissolved also the harmless Social Democratic Party, the Nazis did not spare even the reformist trade unions. These were also destroyed, their leaders were arrested, their funds confiscated. Practically, all the leaders and active members of the labour movement, except those who fled the country in time, were arrested and held in prison without any trial or even any charge framed against them legally. Many were brutally murdered, and almost all of them inhumanly ill-treated in prison. This brutal attack upon the working class was followed by an official communiqué which announced: 'Three months of National Socialist Government proves to you, workers, that Hitler is your friend; that Hitler wrestles with the problems of your freedom; and that Hitler will supply you with work and bread.'

While in Germany Fascism was still making demagogic promises to the deceived and deluded multitude, in Italy, twelve years after its accession to power, it was speaking an entirely different language. At the end of 1934, the General Secretary of the Fascist party, Achilles Starace, addressing a meeting of mostly unemployed workers, declared: 'Remember that Fascism promises you neither honours nor jobs nor profits but only duty and combat.' Only a few hours before, the leader himself had spoken at another workers' meeting in Milan. There, he had expounded what could be called the idealism of Fascist economy.

> The economy which concerned itself only with private gain is being replaced by an economy which has as its principal object the safeguarding of the interests of the collectivity. The workers must enter ever more intimately into

> the production process, participating in its necessary discipline. If the last century was the century of power of capitalism, the present century is the century of power and glory of labour.

A system that permits its official spokesmen to talk two different languages in course of one single day, cannot have any other principle than insincerity and cynicism. Having brutally destroyed all free organizations of labour, abolished the right of strike, cutting down wages on the plea of national necessity, Mussolini bragged about the power and glory of labour!

Having come to power with the support of the big capitalists, terrified by the spectre of Communism and Syndicalism, Mussolini could never be sincere in his professions regarding the welfare of the workers. The original programme of his Fascist party was a queer mixture of Syndicalism and nationalist jingoism. But before long, the programme became the defence of Capitalism against the rising tide of revolution. The doctrine of national solidarity provided the plea for the swing from pseudo-leftism to the extreme right. The blackshirted army of Mussolini was mostly recruited from middle-class hooligans, and paid and equipped with money freely given by the big industrialists. Even before Mussolini came to power, his mercenary bands were turned loose against the Socialists and labour organizations. After his advent to power, trade union offices were raided and nearly twenty thousand leading members of the labour movement were either killed or imprisoned or forced to go to exile.

The real picture of the condition of the working class, after more than fifteen years of Fascist rule in Italy, is given in a book written by a Fascist economist. During the great war, the real wages of the Italian workers were reduced by half. In the years 1919–21, the pre-war level was regained. That was the result of the revolutionary action of the working class against which Fascism appeared as the bloody instrument of Capitalism. Today the real wages have again sunk nearly to the level of the war period. (*Vide* Dr Paola Arcari, *Wages and Cost of Living*). As against this increased exploitation of the working class, the tax burden on the rich classes has been progressively reduced by Fascism. Inheritance taxes have been greatly reduced, while the scope of indirect taxation has been enlarged. Over sixty per cent of the State revenue is levied through taxes which fall upon the toiling masses.

The attitude of the Fascist government towards the big landlords has been no less friendly. It violently suppressed the Catholic Popular Party which advocated redistribution of land in favour of the poor peasants. Even today, nearly forty per cent of the agricultural land belong to half a per cent of the agrarian population. The remainder is distributed among about five million families, two million of whom are tenants. The average holding of a peasant family is slightly more than two acres. No less than one-third of the gross produce of agriculture is appropriated by the landlords as rent. Even a greater share goes to the State in the form of direct and indirect taxes.

In Germany, Fascism, though sailing under the false colour of 'National Socialism', does not show any less dark a record. The ultra-nationalist policy of self-sufficiency has been forcing the cost of living higher and higher. On the other hand, for expanding export trade artificially, the wages have been cut down to reduce the cost of production. The much advertised solution of the problem of unemployment was the result of cutting down wages to a miserable level and forcible dispatch of unemployed workers to the notorious labour camps where they performed practically unpaid labour.

> The German people staggers under a load of low wages, part-time employment and high cost of living; and the Nazi Labour Front, which was to have abolished the struggle and brought employers and workers together in friendly collaboration, is said to be rapidly breaking up [*The New Statesman and Nation*, London, 8 Sept. 1934].

Since this was written, the disintegration of the Labour Front has been prevented by transforming it into a system of slavery for the workers. In this system of class collaboration in national interest, the share of the workers is discipline and sacrifice. . . .

Hitler's position towards the end of 1934 was as depicted in the following:

> Absolute this Fuhrer may be, but certainly he is not omnipotent. He too must placate great interests and study such drifts of instinctive feelings as may have survived the dragooning of public opinion. Mass emotion does not yet concern him; he is confident that he can still cope with it by propaganda, and amuse it by pageantry; in the last resort, he will crush it and terrorize it, as he crushed the less reliable part of the Brown Army. For his former paymasters, the captains of great industry, he has more respect. They told him to discipline the pseudo-revolutionary left; convincing himself that he was asserting his own personal authority, he promptly obeyed them. It is probable that he will continue to obey them. [*The New Statesman and Nation*, 11 Aug., 1934.]

Time and again, Hitler as well as the leading members of his party have boasted that the triumph of National Socialism in Germany has saved Europe from Bolshevism. 'If the Nazis had not won, Bolshevism would not only have conquered Germany, but all of Europe. The Nazi success was our sole salvation from complete Bolshevik barbarism.' As a matter of fact, in the beginning, the German Fascists had not even pretended to be Socialists. Already in the revolutionary days of 1919 to 1920 they declared their object to be 'fight against the Red Peril'. Hitler began to solicit financial support from the Employers' Association as early as 1922 on the ground that his party was committed to an anti-labour policy. 'He did not betray the workers after his rise to power; he was against them from the beginning' [Conrad Heiden, *History of National Socialism*]. Only in 1926, the Hitlerites began the anti-capitalist agitation. The pseudo-socialist clauses were introduced into the party programme not on the initiative of Hitler, but against his opposition by the Strasser brothers. They were removed from the party leadership, as soon as it came to power, and ultimately one was killed and the other emigrated.

In the second year of the Hitler regime, the left wing of the party began to show marked signs of dissatisfaction with the reactionary policy of the ruling clique. There was a large proletarian element in the party. The rank and file of the Brown Army was largely proletarian, recruited from the unemployed young workers. They expected some of the extravagant promises of economic relief to be fulfilled. There was a growing cry for 'the second revolution'. The powers behind Hitler's throne were annoyed as well as alarmed. In behalf of the landowners and militarists, von Papen made a menacing speech. Krupp von Bohlen threatened to resign his chairmanship of the Economic Advisory Council. The threat implied withdrawal of the support of heavy industry from the Hitler regime. The order was given and Hitler had to obey. He enacted the infamous 'blood purge' of his party on 30 June 1934, in order to destroy 'the danger of a second revolution [Goering]'.

While thus acting under the dictate of the landlords, militarists, and capitalists, Hitler announced: 'our programme is epochal, not immediate. Our system will exist for a thousand years. We are working for the millennium. Have patience! Wait!' As regards socialization of industries, demanded by his deluded followers, he opposed experiments as dangerous, 'because they eliminate the creative element, the power of personality, from the industrial process'. Expropriation of big estates was also a part of the original programme of his party. In power, he expressed the opinion that 'efficient production demands that the great estates remain intact'.

> The men who pull the strings in new Germany, are the heavy industrialists, the great financiers, the *Junker* class. At their dictation, Hitler removed the pseudo-socialist tune from the programme of National Revolution. Capitalism commanded its retainer to put an end to interference with profit; Hitler obeyed; the revolution is over. [Ernst Henri, *Hitler Over Europe*.]

That is a correct statement of the situation in Germany under Hitler regime. The Fascist profession of Socialism was a deception. Raised to power by the ruling classes, the Nazis are ruining Germany to satisfy the greed of their masters.

The Hitlerites won the support of the ruined middle classes with their cry against the Versailles Treaty. They wanted to vindicate national honour. Revenge against the powers who had inflicted the humiliating treaty upon the German people was the war-cry of the Fascists. But before a year was over after his accession to power, Hitler declared: 'We do not need to rehabilitate the honour of our people on the battlefield. There, nobody has taken it from us. Only one disgrace has bafallen us. It was not in the West, nor in the East, but back home. This disgrace, we have made good.' [Speech at the Nuremberg Festival, September 1933.] The disgrace referred to was the revolution, the triumph of which alone would have guaranteed the real welfare of the German nation.

Except in the case of the Soviet Union, the Fascist warlikeness is a demagogic bluff and bluster. Hitler's spectacular repudiation of the military clauses of the Treaty of Versailles could not be possibly successful except with the connivance of the allied powers. Today, Germany has against built up a powerful army. But four years ago, when the Fascist Government declared the determination to tear off the Versailles Treaty and rearm Germany, the political alignment and correlation of military strength of the European nations was such that the bluff could be called any time if the allied powers wanted. . . .

Those who admire Germany's miraculous recovery of military power do not know how that process took place actually with the aid and consent of the allied powers who thus acted under the fear of a revolution in Germany. Many years before Hitler appeared on the scene with the mission of vindicating the national honour of Germany, the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty had been greatly rescinded by the Locarno Pact. According to that treaty, negotiated by the Republican government which was accused by the Nazis for having sold Germany to the Allies, the occupied territories were evacuated many years earlier than provided in the Versailles Treaty. Another concession granted by the Locarno Pact was the withdrawal of the Allied Control Commission which was to supervise the disarming of Germany and particularly the demilitarization of the left bank of the Rhine. Britain and France, preoccupied with Chamberlain's idea of creating an anti-Soviet block, made these concessions to Germany which, practically, permitted her re-militarization. This happened years before Hitler's demagogy had mobilized German manhood for vindicating national honour. British diplomacy, under Chamberlain, wanted a strong Germany as a bulwark against the 'Bolshevik menace'. And the danger of a revolution in Germany which might easily cross the Rhine scared France out of her wits. Briand's misguided liberalism destroyed her security established by the Versailles Treaty.

So, the doubtful glory of having regained for Germany the right to arm herself does not belong to Hitler. It was acquired before as a gift from the allies, and the gift was not to the German nation but to those who had driven her to the disaster of the Great War and had made immense profit out of that disgrace. Now they set about to make more profit out of the glory so easily won. Within one year of the withdrawal of the Control Commission, the military budget of the German government increased ten times. That meant large orders for the heavy industries. The jingoist nationalism of the Nazis was a pretext for expediting the process of rearmament so profitable for big business. Immediately upon Hitler's advent to power, the monthly expenditure on rearmament rose to hundred million dollars a month. It has been rapidly increasing ever since. The Fascist state has discarded the parliamentary procedure of publishing its budgets. Therefore, it is very difficult to make any accurate estimate of the money spent on armament. But according to competent military experts, it was more than one thousand million marks in 1934. That represented forty per cent increase over the previous year.

Most of this huge sum, which is practically [a] subsidy for the heavy industry, is raised by internal loans. The people are simply forced to subscribe to these loans. In 1935, the internal indebtedness of Germany was one third of the total national wealth. Since the rearmament programme cannot be paid out of current income, it must be paid out of future income. The future of the nation is mortgaged to the munition-makers. Taxation has reached its limits. The result is sinking standard of living for the majority of the population. Those who can pay easily find the way to shirk the responsibility. In 1934, a decree was issued asking all big industrial enterprises to hold at the disposal of the Government all dividends exceeding six per cent. Promptly, the balance sheet of big trusts (Krupp, Thyssen, I. G. Farben, A. E. G., etc.), making huge profits out of the nationalist orgy of rearmament, showed a profit less than six per cent. On the other hand, all the funds of the savings banks, trade unions, cooperatives, and other social insurance institutions, have been taken over by the Government in return for 'rearmament notes'. Thus, the whole burden is falling on the poor middle classes and the proletariat, who will further pay with their lives when 'the war for vindicating national honour' comes.

An eminent economist, formerly attached to the German Government, writes:

> The only gainers, as the past two years of Hitler's regime have shown us, will be the manufacturers of armaments. They will not have to suffer losses, because of a shortage of raw materials, as the import policy of the Government favours the importation of raw materials needed for military purposes at the expense of those needed in the production of consumer's goods. [Paul Crosser in *The New Republic*, New York, 6 March 1935.]

Mass consumption has been forced down. The standard of consumption is fixed by the Government. The standard of all staple articles of food has been reduced by 25 to 30 per cent. As regards clothing, it has been cut to half. The forcibly reduced standard of consumption serves as the measure for adjusting wages. Small traders, craftsmen, and the peasants suffer in consequence of the rapidly sinking purchasing power of the working class. The Nazi leaders do not promise any improvement. On the contrary, they demand sacrifice and more sacrifice for national honour. . . .

Only in the case of the Soviet Union, the Nazi warmongers mean what they say. Their foreign policy is guided by Bismark's dictum '*Drang nach Osten*'. To destroy Bolshevism and conquer the fertile fields of Russia, are the dreams of the Neo-German Imperialism. Immediately upon his accession to power, Hitler entered into an international intrigue for an attack upon the Soviet Union. In the projected holy crusade against the home of Bolshevism, the Nazis were prepared to enter into an alliance with the national foes of Germany, namely, France and England. The agitation for a war of revenge against the powers who inflicted the shame of Versailles upon Germany was all a bluff. In March 1933, Hitler had a secret conference with the Polish Minister in Berlin. He proposed a joint attack upon the USSR. Poland also was counted among the national enemies of Germany. But Hitler was prepared to forget [the] old grudge in order to secure Polish help for making war upon the Soviet Union. It is reported that he proposed a division of Russian territories with Poland. The next diplomatic move of Hitler was to send Rosenberg to London as his special envoy, with the mission of drawing Britain in an anti-Soviet alliance. Hitler had to set aside his pet idea of the war against Russia, because it was not favourably received either in London or in Paris. Not that the rulers of England and France were averse to such a war, but they knew better than Hitler, and were therefore unwilling to plunge headlong in the adventure. . . .

VII The Practice of Fascism

In August 1934, a Manifesto was issued to the world over the signatures of a large number of scientists, writers, and leaders in other branches of intellectual activity, calling for an international congress to combat the cultural menace of Fascism. The following are extracts from that historical document:

> We know that in the Fascist countries many highly respected scholars have been driven from the scene of their activities, or have voluntarily quitted their home, because they refused to sacrifice their learning to the violent demands of the totalitarian State. Specially the events in Germany have evoked our most profound concern for the perpetuation of the freedom of science: In that country, the exact sciences have been openly degraded to jobbing for war industries. Only such investigations are favoured, as are likely to bring about economic and technical predominance over the world. All branches of physics which cannot be made to serve political and economical imperialism are therefore hampered and restricted. Studies which have contributed essentially to the broadening of our concepts of the physical universe, are thrust aside openly as vain and fruitless intellectualism. Verified scientific knowledge concerning heredity and race is cast aside. In its place, appear new doctrines, unverified by honest research, for the annihilation of hundreds of thousands of human existences. In accordance with the National Socialist belief that it is senseless to help the weak at the expense of the biologically strong, social hygiene is shorn of all justification. Colleges are forced to establish 'chairs of natural healing'. The gates are opened to superstition and deceit. Regardless of historical truth, prehistorical and ancient times are so presented as to support the thesis of superiority of the nation concerned and the inferiority of all others. Very often, purposeful mysticism is substituted for an awkward historical truth. The suppression of free research and the violation of truth are most clearly revealed in the new jurisprudence which is designed to give a theoretical basis for the cruel and arbitrary practices founded on legal conceptions of the Middle Ages. Teaching and studying are enslaved along with pure science. Colleges suffer from intellectual terror. Through the misuse and contempt for free research, there is an imminent danger that the whole structure of scientific knowledge will be destroyed, and from the fragments a new series of pseudo-science will be erected, which will be harmful for the progress of mankind.

Within two months after Hitler's accession to power, more than two hundred eminent men of learning were driven from their high academic positions. The vandalism was committed on the pretext that those men were Jews. Many of them were Jews, but their real crime was that they were freethinkers, some were Socialists, most of them Liberals, and others guilty 'merely of the impartiality and integrity of mind which in Nazi eyes are the greatest of all crimes'. (*The Manchester Guardian*, mid-May 1933). Those illustrious victims of Fascist barbarism counted among themselves such men of world-historical importance as Albert Einstein, Professor Zondek, famous gynaecologist of Berlin, the greatest leading chemists, Richard Willstaetter and Fritz Haber, the famous Professor of Psychology in the University of Heidelberg, Otto Meyerhoff, the economist of international fame Moritz Bonn, and a whole host of others of equal eminence in different branches of science. Einstein was declared as the 'enemy No. 1 of awakened Germany'. This fact alone is the most damaging testimony for condemning Fascism at the bar of humanity as the mad enemy of civilization and culture. The testimony becomes simply overwhelming when it is known that all the leading lights of the scientific, literary, and artistic life of contemporary Germany have been driven out of the Nazi Third Reich.

The Nazis were not content with depriving the seats of learning in Germany of the brilliant lights who had made them famous. They wanted to inflict their vandalism upon the rest of the world. Upon his leaving Germany, Einstein was invited by the College de France to honour it by accepting a chair. Thereupon the Nazi press clamorously demanded that in future the dismissed academicians should not be allowed to leave Germany, lest the 'enemies of Germany insulted her by honouring them'.

The burning of the Library of Alexandria remains recorded as one of the most revolting events of history. The Fascists, at last, have outshone even that act of incendiarism. They made a bonfire of over twenty thousand books, written by great authors in all branches of human knowledge. The Library of Alexandria was burned in the age of barbarism, which followed the collapse of antique civilization. But the deliberate destruction of a vast collection of works of science and literature by the Nazis took place in the twentieth century, in the heart of one of the centres of modern civilization. It was not a random act committed by fanatics in the heat of passion. It was a deliberate attempt to destroy the accumulated result of scientific research, cultural progress, and artistic achievements which did not fit in with the savage cult of Fascism. A long list was made of all such 'objectionable' works, and they were collected by force throughout the country and thrown to the flames in a number of places.

The world was horrified by that organized destruction of scientific and literary treasures. 'All the standards that civilization has created are being uprooted [*The Nation*, New York, 5 July 1933]'. Commenting on that incredible act of vandalism, a famous German publicist, domiciled in America, wrote:

> The burning of the works of Thomas Mann, for example, damns them [Nazis] more deeply than anything else, since it marks their repudiation of

> their own highest embodiment of human civilization and a frank plunge into degenerate savagery. It is to be noted that an attack of unrivalled strength and ferocity is being launched against the life of the mind, against all intellectual values, against all disinterestedness of thought, of research, of aspiration, against the slowly won rights of human spirit, against every principle and every truth and every freedom that men have lived for and often died for, since the Renaissance, against all that had constituted for so long the very character of humanity itself. [Ludwig Lewison in *The Nation*, New York, 21 June 1933.]

The Nazis are proud of their contempt for 'intellectualism'. Indeed, glorification of ignorance is a part of their cult. 'The young Nazis today make a virtue of being ignorant and despising the learning and attainments which generations of German culture slowly achieved [Hamilton Fish Armstrong in the *Foreign Affairs*, July 1933]'. This is not anti-Nazi propaganda. The Nazi Minister of Education, Rust, declared that 'National Socialism is not unscientific, but only hostile to theories'. One could only smile to hear of science without theory, and wonder what that could be. The Minister, however, does not leave the world in doubt. In their cultural conviction, the Fascists are nothing if they are not brutally frank. The Minister gave a definition of science without theory, when he announced that 'philosophy and science must be reorientated in the spirit of the Storm-Troopers'. A description of that spirit will be best given in official Nazi jargon:

> So stand the Storm Batallions
> Ready for racial fight;
> Only when Jews lie bleeding
> Can we be really free.
>
> [National Anthem]

'They must try to make the world understand why Germany on 30 January 1933 had struck out the word pacifism from its vocabulary [Von Papen, as Vice-Chancellor in Hitler's first Government]'. On that day, Hitler became the Chancellor of Germany.

'For the living, it is a holy duty to fulfil the mission for which Germans gave their lives in the war. They must be ready to redeem with blood a pledge written in blood [Goering].' The man who best represents the spirit of the storm troopers laid down the function of the women in a community inculcated with that spirit. 'The women's place is in the home; her duty, the recreation of the tired warrior.' And the Nazi young womanhood, inspired with the spirit of the storm troopers, responded. 'There is no higher or finer privilege for a woman than that of sending her children to war [Declaration of the Women's Order of the Red Swastika]'. Finally, there is the oracle, the Minister of National Enlightenment and Propaganda, Goebbels: 'The woman's task is to be beautiful and to bring children into the world. The female bird decorates herself for the male and hatches the eggs for him. In return, the male looks after the food or else he stands on guard and scares the enemy away.' The new spirit of 'awakened Germany' knows no difference between man and lower animals. The same instinct that guides the latter holds good also for the former. That is Nazi reorientation of philosophy and science.

The fanatical race hatred of the Fascists, besides being one more token of mediaeval barbarism, is a convenient camouflage. Their diatribes against the legendary Jewish international finance serve as a smokescreen to hide their subservience to the real financial and industrial power. It was not in the economic, but in the scientific and cultural fields, that the Jews occupied prominent positions. In the former, they were no more powerful than traders, often being the smaller fry. The great industrial combines and potential banking concerns which, controlling the economic life of Germany, also dictate her political destiny, are owned and directed by Christians. Jewish intellectuals (some of them standing in the forefront of the world of science and art), Socialists and traders (mostly petty shopkeepers), are sacrificed on the altar of artificially fomented race hatred as the bait to catch the guileless petty-bourgeois victims of Capitalism to become the abject instrument for furthering its rapacious designs. The ferocious anti-Semitism of the Nazis has been explained as follows by an authority of modern history:

> In the nineteenth century, social prejudice and practice virtually excluded Jews from higher offices in the army and the civil service. This is one reason why Jews devoted themselves so largely to the practice of law and medicine, to literature and similar professions, and came to have a preponderance in these occupations, thereby arousing the jealousy and envy of the National Socialists who covet these positions for themselves. [Sidney Fay, Professor of History, Harvard University, 'Nazi Treatment of the Jews', in *Current History*, New York, June 1933.]

With still another fiction, the Nazis justify their anti-Semitism. Socialism and Communism are condemned as the product of the conspiracy of international Jewry. Marxism is characterized as the manifestation of Jewish greed, harmful for the interest of the German people and incompatible with the cultural genius of the Teutonic race. With this argument, anti-Semitism is made a part of the crusade against the revolutionary working class movement. But the fact is that the German working class almost completely belonged to the 'Teutonic' race—more completely than any other section of the German people. There were Jews among the intellectual leaders of the movement. But the rank and file is purely Christian.

Even today, more than fifty thousand men and women are held in prison or detention camps in Nazi Germany. Most probably not more than one per cent of these victims of Fascist terror belong to the outlawed Jewish race. But ninety per cent of them belong to the working class.

The motive behind the mad race hatred is neither 'scientific' nor political, but purely economic. Every Jew ousted from his position either as a professor, or a professional, or a trader made room for a Nazi aspirant who could not be successful by his own merit. The result of anti-Semitism has indeed been beneficial for some Aryan traders. But for the academic and cultural life of Germany it has been a marked degeneration. The chairs in the famous German seats of learning, vacated by academicians of international fame, have been filled by mediocrities. The repulsive cult of hatred, which has thus ruined the intellectual life of Germany, is given a pseudo-scientific foundation by prostituting the science of anthropology. The foundation of the doctrine of the purity and quality of blood, which has been raised to the dignity of 'science' in the spirit of the storm trooper, was laid by the frustrated sign-painter who has made a hell out of Germany.

> The black haired Jewish youth lies for hours in ambush, a satanic joy in his face, for the unsuspecting girl whom he pollutes with his blood and steals from her own race. By every means, he seeks to wreck the racial bases of the nation he intends to subdue. Just as individually he deliberately befouls women and girls, so he never shrinks from breaking the barriers race has erected against foreign elements. It was, and is, the Jew who brought Negroes to the Rhine, brought them with the same aim and with deliberate intent to destroy the white race he hates, by persistent bastardization, to hurl it from the cultural and political heights it has attained, and to ascend to them as its masters. He deliberately seeks to lower the race level by steady corruption of the individual. . . . [Hitler, *Mein Kampf.*]

The 'outward strength' having been acquired through monstrous rearming by ruining the German masses economically, the Nazis are on the war path for shouldering their share of the 'white man's burden'. The other day, Hitler announced that 'it is absolutely essential for Germany to make herself strong so that she can successfully demand the return of her colonies'. And Goering, with his characteristic brutal frankness, told the world how the ambition will be realized: 'We must continue our demand for colonies and must make the demand louder and louder until the world is unable to resist it. The main truth is that Germany has now a new and strong army, and she has got rid of her inferiority complex..' Supermen are in power in Germany. They are convinced of their racial superiority, and they are determined to regain the place in the sun. That is the practical expression of the mystic cult of race and blood.

From its very birth, Fascism, as an international phenomenon, was avowedly imperialist. Already in 1919, Mussolini wrote. Imperialism is the eternal and immutable law of life. Now he is all ready with his plan of imperialist expansion. Shortly before the invasion of Abyssinia, he announced the plan.

> Italy has no future in the West and the North. Her future lies to the East and to South—in Asia and Africa. The vast resources of Asia must be valorized, and Africa must be brought within the orbit of civilization. We demand that nations, which have already arrived in Africa, do not block at every Italian expansion.

The Fascists do not make a secret about the way to their expansionist ambition. Their cry is: 'A war for space and employment.' Colonies must be conquered in war which, incidentally, will solve the problem of unemployment at home by consuming the masses of unemployables as cannon-fodder. In its period of decay, Capitalism cannot give employment to an increasing section of the working class. No relief can be given to the permanently unemployed, because of the falling rate of profit. Therefore, the solution of the problem of unemployment, born of the decay of Capitalism, is to be found in the abolition of the decayed system in favour of an economy free of internal contradictions. But the historical role of Fascism is to defend the outworn system, which has become antagonistic to the general welfare of the community. Therefore, Fascism seeks the solution of the problem of unemployment in war. It has been correctly said that Fascism means war. This characterization is borne out by the following famous declarations.

> Fascism issued from the war, and in war it must find its outlet. Our country cannot advance except through a great war. [Mario Carli.]
>
> Three cheers for the war! May I be permitted to raise this cry. Three cheers for Italy's war, noble and beautiful above all! Three cheers also for war in general! [*Popolo d'Italia*.]

This is an extract from an article by Mussolini written in the very beginning of the Fascist movement. Two years later, still not yet in power, he wrote in the same paper, the central organ of his party: 'Peace is absurd, or rather, it is a pause in war.' In 1926, speaking in the Chamber of Deputies, he declared 'the Italian nation to be in a permanent state of war'. The next year, he graphically described the ideal of Fascism:

> We must be ready at a moment's notice to mobilize five million men and be able to arm them; we must strengthen our navy and also our aviation, in which I believe more and more, and which must be so numerous and so powerful that the roar of its motors will drown every other noise on the peninsula, and the surface of its wings hide the sun from our land.

To fulfil these conditions for the realization of Fascist ambition, the Italian masses have been economically ruined. The echo of their suffering and the voice of their protest have been ruthlessly suppressed so that nothing but the beating of war-drums can be heard on the peninsula of Italy.

Before the Abyssinian war, the Italian government had incurred an indebtedness amounting to the incredible figure of hundred and fifty thousand million liras. It is estimated to have increased at least by fifty per cent since then. Owning to the inability of the financially bankrupt State to make the payments necessary for balancing international trade, imports have been progressively restricted. And in the limited quota of import, preference was given to articles necessary for the preparation of war. The result has been continuous rise of the prices of foodstuff and other articles for consumption. On the other hand, salaries and wages have been continuously falling. With rising prices, falling wages, and decreasing purchasing power of the lira, the standard of living of the entire people, except a thin upper stratum, is being forced further and further down.

In Germany, the Fascists not only follow the footsteps of their forerunners in Italy, but improve upon them. While preparing for the war of conquest of the 'weak and the backward' races, they have committed upspeakable cruelties for exterminating the enemy at home. Not only the working class, but all progressive elements—Liberals, Pacifists, Humanitarians, true Christians—are included under the category of the enemy to be exterminated in order to make National Socialism triumphant. The numerous prisons and detention camps, where many thousands of these enemies are held, are the scene of mediaeval torture perpetrated to extract confessions from the helpless victims and to make them declare allegiance to the Nazi regime. This method of exterminating internal enemies was defended by the Nazis in the International Penological Congress held in Berlin in autumn 1935. The German delegation, headed by Goebbels, advocated the doctrine of 'severity in prison' as against the 'treatment of humanity and education' urged by the delegates from other countries. Goebbels brazenly maintained that the torture of prisoners was 'necessary and useful'. The shameless pronouncement of the Nazis so horrified the foreign delegates that a famous French jurist exclaimed: 'The idea of revenge must disappear from every utterance of justice. Otherwise, we return to barbarism.' Consequently, a large number of foreign delegates left the Congress, having declared that the gulf between the concepts of penology prevailing in their country and those in Germany was so vast that there could be no basis for even a discussion of the principles propounded by the German delegation, which included the Nazi Minister of Justice.

> I have been in a German labour camp: I have been in a German prison. I have seen terrible things. Keep out of that hell.Germany is hell, because one loses hope there. I am a Christian. I cannot talk to those people. But I can talk to the Communists, because, for one thing, they have sense, and, for another, they care about the welfare of humanity.

This declaration was made by a Catholic priest in a working class meeting in the Saar Valley on the eve of the plebiscite, the result of which was hailed as another popular support for the Nazis. It depicts the true state of affairs brought about by the practice of Fascism. The experience of that practice compelled a Catholic priest, no friend of Bolshevism, to recognize the defender of the welfare of humanity precisely in that movement to destroy which is the declared mission of Fascism. That evidence alone should be enough to condemn it as a scourge.

Fragments of a Prisoner's Diary Vol. I
THE MEMOIRS OF A CAT

I Justification

Introductory editorial note

On 20 August 1935, M. N. Roy wrote from District Jail, Dehra Dun to Ellen Gottschalk in Paris:

> Now I shall give you a little surprise. At Bareilly [Central Prison] I raised a nice cat. About two years ago it came—a tiny thing, with its mother. I gave it some milk and it stayed. I got very fond of it. But my companion (a particularly disagreeable fellow prisoner) violently objected to its being. It is strange that people should worship the cow and hate the cat. But I won't give in. There were other difficulties to overcome. The poor little thing was nearly killed by three dogs. The result was that I began to see the world through my cat's green eyes, and that was an amusing sight. So much so that I was encouraged to record *The Reflections of My Cat*—something on the lines of *Autobiography of Alice* [*B.*] *Toklas* by Gertrude Stein. Nothing so very highbrow, of course . . . my cat speaks very plainly, and about homely matters which are expected to interest some, though they are sure to shock many.

That was how *The Memoirs of a Cat* came to be written. It was composed in Central Prison, Bareilly in 1934–5, and the handwritten draft is contained in the fifth volume of the Prison Manuscripts. The opening page of this volume gives the date 8 September 1934 (when he was actually lodged at District Jail, Almorah), but on page 300 of this volume we find the following entry: 'Some Reflections of a Cat by M. N. Roy, Central Prison, Bareilly, 19 January 1935.' This is followed by a projected table of contents with eight chapter headings: 1. Justification 2. Why one is born 3. Karma 4. Deserted 5. Fate smiles on me again 6. Illness 7. My enemies 8. My friends. Actually, Roy found time to write only the first three chapters; of these, the first two were edited by him, and they were brought out as a book entitled *Fragments of a Prisoner's Diary Vol. I: The Memoirs of a Cat*, in 1940 by The Indian Renaissance Association, Dehra Dun, U. P. In the Prison manuscripts these two chapters occupied pages 302–86 of volume V. The chapter on 'Karma' was subsequently included in a larger collection entitled *Crime and Karma: Cats and Women* (rev. 2nd edn. 1957).

From his letters and the projected table of contents in the Prison Manuscripts it is clear that Roy intended to write a full-length book, with the Cat providing him the persona. However, that was not to be. In a prefatory note to the published book Roy explained:

> Originally I did plan to record the events in the life of my cat; of course as long as we would be together in jail. Six years was long enough to plan ahead. But the work was interrupted by my transfer to a different jail. The cat, of course, was not transferred. It lived in jail, but it was not a prisoner. In the absence of its subject the biography of the cat could not be continued. The reflections, being largely imaginary, could be continued even then. But the

> incentive was not there. Moreover, the transfer to a different jail placed me in conditions more favourable for serious scientific work. Consequently the 'Memoirs of a Cat' remained incomplete as a piece of history of questionable value. But the observations made therein are self-contained, and, though done in a light vein, are meant to provoke thoughts.

I find from his *Letters from Jail* that at the time of his entry about the 'Reflections' in the fifth volume Roy was seriously ill and had to be hospitalized for some time. On 20 January 1935 he wrote from Central Prison, Bareilly, that 'lately I have been rather fagged out—mentally', and on 19 February we get the news that he has been transferred back to prison from the hospital. The cat, in a way, would seem to have helped in his convalescence, and he was sad to leave her behind when he was removed to District Jail, Dehra Dun. Roy retained his fondness for cats even in later years. As a frequent guest at 13 Mohini Road, Dehra Dun (where the Roys lived from 1938 onwards), I was quite accustomed to seeing more than half-a-dozen pet cats, each called by an individual name, having their regular breakfast in the kitchen hall and having the run of the lawn and garden. Roy's particular favouite was Reddi, a gorgeous cat, who carried the sobriquet Il *Magnifico*. Roy admired cats for what he considered to be their independent spirit and detachment; qualities he wished human beings also to cultivate.

The Cat's memoirs were for Roy a bit of relaxation, while his more strenuous preoccupations during the prison years were with the projected book on the Philosophical Consequences of Modern Science and with political developments in India, Europe, and the Soviet Union. *The Memoirs*, though incomplete, stands out as a striking work of belles-lettres. Although Roy didn't mention it, I have a hunch that the form and style of this book might have been influenced by Roy's reading of the great Bengali novelist and essayist Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya whose ideas had imbued him and his generation during his youthful years. In any case, Roy's cat and her reflections remind me of the philosophical cat of Kamalakanta.

For the present selection I have included only the first chapter of the *Reflections* which was entitled 'Justification' both in the manuscript and the edited book (pp. 302–49 in the jail volume 5; pp. 7–60 in the 1940 edition). Considerations of space have constrained me to omit the other chapter 'Why one is born'.

SNR.

I Justification

Well, ladies and gentlemen, don't be disdainful and be simply amused by this unprecedented event in the annals of literature. Whoever has heard of a cat telling the world the story of her life. And a common, plebeian, so to say, cat at that. Worse still, a 'criminal' cat—by parentage. But to this highly interesting, in the sociological sense, part of my story I shall come by and by. I know you are intrigued; in spite of the apparently amused disdain at this feline venture into literature, you are curious to hear the story. And, be sure, you won't be disappointed. It is going to be an instructive, if not a fascinating story. You see, I am not altogether unequipped for the task. I have a not too modest opinion of myself. Lack of modesty is a condition for success in literary venture. If writers were handicapped with this virtue, perhaps many of the dubiously bright lights in the firmament of literature would never shine. There are cynics who would mutter with grim humour, 'That might not have been such a great misfortune'. Though not an admirer of cynicism, by which I mean the temperament that results from either a faulty or too good a digestion, I am nevertheless inclined to agree with the cynic on this particular point. Frankly speaking, except in the terms of profit, made by those engaged in the printing and publishing business, it would be difficult to account for the meteoric appearance of many literary phenomena, including not a few best-sellers. In my humble opinion, the measure of a true advance in literature should be not the number of writers, but of readers. For this opinion, I am likely to be suspected of cattishness. But I am, after all, a cat. One cannot go away from one's shadow.

It appears rather odd, doesn't it? that, with this cattish reflection upon the numerous devotees of the fair Goddess Saraswati, I should be going to join their ranks, and increase the number of useless books in the world. But you don't expect a poor uneducated cat to be logical. A literary cat is bad enough; a rational cat would be simply insufferable. I naturally don't wish to tax the indulgence of the reader too much in the beginning.

Let me return to the point from which I have wandered away, just like a cat. I was going to explain why I did not plunge into my story right away. The reason is some diffidence on my part. I believe it is necessary to justify this unusual venture. How could a cat come to take it for granted that the story of its life would interest human readers? This question might be disposed off simply by the retort: Well, why not? That would be, in my opinion, quite a pertinent answer to what appears to me to be a rather impertinent question. But I am not overbearing. On the contrary, as mentioned above, it is with some hesitation that I am going to tell my story.

I have had occasions to observe men from close quarters. It may be pointed out incidentally that, having passed my short life in a prison, I have never come in contact with human beings of my sex. But I dare say that in many respects, particularly of the biological nature, they feel and act much as I do myself. In addition to my personal experience, I can count upon the accumulated experience of my whole species. Although cats are never really domesticated, in the sense of being enslaved, yet, with their spitfire nature, partially preserved against selfish human affection, my kind have acquired access to that intimate corner of human existence where all put-up appearances fall away.

We haunt the hearth and home, and therefore enjoy the uncommon opportunity of finding out man in his true nature. Unfortunately, I have not lived in a human home; but Prison is also an interesting place. Here also the beast in man creeps out of his human skin; and one, with a keen power of cynical observation, possessed by my species, encounters all sorts of amusing and illuminating mental phenomena. Besides, I have inherited the highly developed cynicism and studied indifference which characterize our species because we know too much. Having been taken aback by the incredible amount of human ignorance, I have come to the conclusion, after months and months of calm reflection, that it would be selfish of me to hold back the treasure of knowledge we possess. This literary curiosity is the concrete form of that altruistic conclusion.

Now, mine is not going to be a pleasant task. Necessarily, I shall have to confront man with the naked picture of himself. I shall be obliged to disregard the advice of the shrewd Indian *rishis*, namely, '*satyam bruyat, priyam bruyat, ma bruyat satyamapriyam*' (tell the truth, but tell pleasant things; don't tell unpleasant truths). Should I be bound by this time-honoured adage, then, my literary adventure might be a success; the first autobiography of a cat might be indulgently received; it might even become a best-seller, provided that the unpleasant truths left unsaid are compensated by pleasing falsehoods, loudly proclaimed as revealed truth. But in that case, my personal triumph would be bought at the cost of public benefit. Since in this literary venture I am moved by an altruistic motive, I propose to be selfless all the way through. I shall be running counter to the instinctive wisdom of my species which is notorious for selfishness. I have my full share of this invaluable heritage. I am fully self-willed as befits a normal cat. As a matter of fact, for reasons to be stated by and by, I am more cynical, distrustful, and indifferent than the average member of my race, and I delight in my perversity. But once I have assumed the role of an altruistic truth-teller, I am going to discharge it with grim determination.

The next problem I have to solve is regarding the most effective way of performing my mission, As regards the mission itself, I, of course, take it for granted. How often have I heard that India has a mission to save the world! I, being also a part of India, may naturally claim a share in that mission, although I have not the slightest idea what it really is. But pondering over the riddle at leisure, which I have in plenty, I have hit upon a solution, quite satisfactory—to myself. Whatever may be the nature of India's mission, the Indians should first of all equip themselves to perform it. I believe that I should be performing my inalienable share of India's world mission, if I reminded the chosen people of God of the fundamental teaching of their philosophy, namely, 'Know Thyself'. This is not exactly the Indian scriptural text. I am afraid, it has a Hellenic flavour. But I have heard it said most authoritatively that the old Greeks themselves learned from India whatever little they knew. In any case, to stress the point that one must know oneself, in order to ascertain if he is fit for the mission given to him by God, is the only practical application of the basic principle of Hindu philosophy, that '*atmajnan*' (knowledge of one's own self) is the highest ideal of human life.

It would, of course, be amazing impudence on the part of a poor illiterate cat to sermonize those who are superior to her, at least in the biological sense. I might be tempted to commit the act of insolence if I allowed myself to be influenced by, for example, Bergson's interpretation of organic evolution. In his opinion, human organism is not to be regarded as the highest product of the process of natural selection; on the contrary, he holds, it is indeed a deteriorated biological form. To drive his point home, the venerable dean of contemporary philosophy points out how unfavourably human organism compares, for example, with the elephantine or apine.

I don't see any valid reason why the tiger, not to mention the lion, should not be added to the list of animals that can claim superiority to man, on such high an authority. And the obviously unchallengeable right of the tiger is shared also by his aunt, which distinction belongs to the cat. Thus, if I chose to, I could justifiably lecture man. The superiority of the wisdom of the elders is traditionally admitted by the Indian social and domestic ethics. As a matter of fact, I am rather young; a little over a year old at this writing. But, as I have mentioned already, I represent the accumulated wisdom of my race.

Besides, just as a Brahmin is a Brahmin, just so is an aunt an aunt; age does not matter. Social privileges are due to the Brahmin traditionally. You must bow before the Brahmin even if he is illiterate or a scoundrel. He is a Brahmin nonetheless, and as such deserves the respect of all others placed lower to him in the social scale by Providential Ordinance, as the *Gita* teaches. Domestic relations are no less providentially arranged than social stratifications. Both are equally immutable. Just think of the Indians not implicitly following the path travelled by their forefathers in the light of revealed wisdom: What would happen as a result of such disregard for venerable traditions? The noble heritage of ignorance, prejudice, superstition would all go by the board. India would be denationalized.

If established rules were not implicitly obeyed, the venerable social structure of India would break down; and there would be no ideal for the divinely ordained reconstruction of the world. The spiritual culture of India places abstract concepts which, if I may have the impertinence to point out, have become sanctified superstitions; it has no respect for the concrete. These are illusions, irrelevant at any rate. Therefore, it is frivolous, or imitating the materialistic West, to test the wisdom of our elders by any concrete standard. The elder is wiser; nor should elderliness be judged by the actual number of years. Respect for abstract standards does not permit such hair-splitting. What are a few years? They may have some significance in relation to the bodily existence. But soul is eternal. It has no age. An aunt may be young, ridiculously so, as a body; but as a soul, that is, as her real self, she must enjoy the full privilege of auntness. And wisdom superior to that of the nephews and nieces is an abstract, absolute, and inalienable attribute of auntness. Auntness! Really, by discovering this abstract idea, I am making some original contribution to philosophy. As far as my cattish information goes, the inventor of 'Abstract Ideas', I mean Plato, did not conceive of it together with such brilliant specimens as horseness, appleness, treeness, so on and so forth.

Notwithstanding all these overwhelmingly convincing reasons, I forego the right to lecture human beings who are inferior to my magnificent nephew, the tiger. I have chosen a simpler, less offensive, but more effective, way of performing my mission—of contributing my share to the achievement of India's world mission. The way chosen is to tell the otherwise meaningless story of my life, lived among men, and therefore correctly reflecting them as they really are in their day to day existence. My record will be candid and courageous. I shall depict men, who have had any relation with my insignificant existence, just as I have found them to be. . . .

Heliocentric astronomy, revived by Copernicus, dealt the first blow to human vanity. Modern astral physics has degraded the entire solar system to the insignificance of a 'freak'. If man were the special creation of God, or the finite form of the Infinite (as the Vedantist would prefer to say), why is he placed in such a humiliating position? The physical Universe, with myriads of stars of which our sun is a very ordinary one, and thousands of millions of star-galaxies, is not a gigantic stage set for the man to strut about. The phenomenon of life, particularly in the form of human egocentrism, is not the cream of the cosmic scheme. It is rather a blemish in the magnificent harmony of things. I am a part of this blemish, just as much as is Rabindranath Tagore or Edgar Wallace.

All forms of higher life—man, monkey, horse, dog, cat, bat, to name only a few—grow each out of an egg which is absolutely uniform in all cases. The one of my origin was a tiny lump of primal slime. Great writers also have been hatched out of similar lumps of protoplasm. Nor does the uniformity stop there. It can be traced up to a much later stage of organic evolution. If you compare myself in embryo, that is when I was less than two months old in the mother's womb, with the greatest human scribe in the same condition, one could not be distinguished from the other. The father's contribution was just the same in either case—one sperm, microscopically small bit of albumen formed like a diminutive tadpole. Also in both the cases, the mother supplied the identically constructed egg to be fertilized by the sperm. The body of this poor cat as well as of the great man evolved out of that identically insignificant, and what is more important, accidental, beginning, to the specific morphological state of its birth. In either instance, it thrived as a parasite on the maternal organs. What the mother contributed, she in her turn got from the sun as chlorophyl. Since we entered into the independent existence on earth, we derived our sustenance, composed of identical substances, from solar radiation. Not only the imposing body of the great man, but also his supposedly superior brain, indeed the entire wealth of extraordinary 'spiritual' qualities he is credulously credited with, have absolutely no other mysterious foundation than the accidental combination of the fatherly sperm with the motherly egg, and chemical compounds (mostly carbon) produced from the sun. Just the same is the case with me. The utter groundlessness of human vanity is revealed in the light of these incontestable biological facts.

Man is so limited intellectually that he is utterly incapable of understanding anything unless expressed in the system of phonetics called human language. His egocentrism quite amazingly and illogically has made a virtue out of this really humiliating restriction upon his power of expression and understanding. He stakes his claim to superiority on the doubtful ground that the power of articulated speech marks him out as a special creation of his God. I say, *his* God, because his God, being made by himself after his own image, must be a human God, utterly incapably of having any mutual understanding with the rest of the organic forms evolved out of the primeval slime. We, naturally, have no use for such God. Our God must be of our kind. A nice, swaggering tom-cat, for example, is the ideal object of adoration and worship for a young pretty thing like myself. (By the way, did I mention my sex?) Being an Indian she-cat, I, of course, have inherited the most outstanding and lyrically praised characteristics of Aryan womanhood. The male being, to whom she happens to be hitched on, is the God incarnate for the female. This is not particularly an Indian principle; for, essentially, this idealized code of female conduct is based upon a carnal, and therefore natural, desire. I share this habit of the female to worship the male; because it is the sublimated superstructure of a biological urge which is the only convincing expression of divine purpose, if one is to make such an assumption to make up for human ignorance.

To return to the question of the power of articulated speech. Indisputably, that is a speciality, I should say, peculiarity, of the species which perversely finds it more convenient to balance precariously on two pins than to be in the more comfortable, and therefore natural, posture of resting squarely on all fours, given by God. The creator attached four elongated limbs to the body of higher animals, so that they could carry the burden easily until they are called upon to lay it down. Some of them suddenly took it into their head to interfere with the providential arrangement, owing to the selfish desire for climbing up the trees, so that the juicy fruits might be available to their lust and they might have a generally more advantageous position. Having violated providential arrangement for carnal and selfish motives, the impious but intrepid pioneers of the human race got scared at their own temerity. To placate the displeased God, they made him over after their own image—only with two legs.

My literary ambition has not yet gone to the extent of undertaking the very necessary criticism of the scriptural epics. But I might just as well suggest incidentally that the cult of worshipping Hanuman may be a form of the ancestor worship, current among primitive people. If one followed up this suggestion, two diametrically opposite conclusions might be reached, each according to the preoccupation of the investigator. Those, preoccupied with the zeal to establish the thesis that the most modern achievements of science were made thousands or even tens of thousands of years ago in India, would triumphantly point out that Darwinsim was known to the composer of the Ramayana; but the opposite conclusion, logically to be drawn parallel to the one testifying to India's unsurpassed and unsurpassable greatness, would be a disconcerting anti-climax. It would be that the India of the Ramayana was inhabited by savages given to ancestor-worship. The juxtaposition of a climax and an anti-climax would necessarily raise the question, how is it possible for a people to be highly civilized and savage at the same time? The answer to the question cannot be given speculatively; it must come out of a scientific investigation of the historical value of the Epics.

The differentiation from the rest of the animal world, due to the development of the power of articulated speech, has not been an unmixed blessing for man. The power led to progressive coherence of the human species, which thus set out on the process of social evolution. But that process was in a tangent from the animal world as a whole. Having thus strayed away from his native home, man lost the ability to understand the majority of the population to which he biologically belongs. He thinks that he has ceased to be animal, and certainly has forfeited the superhuman (you might say, subhuman; let us therefore compromise on the more comprehensive term: extra-human) attributes that belong to the animal. To be different is not necessarily to be superior. Man says that he has lived down his animal self. I wonder if he really has. Biology certainly does not justify the pretension. Modern psychology has scant respect for the vanity of man. Psychoanalysis, for example, demonstrates, cruelly and rather cynically, that human behaviour, base as well as noble, is determined by purely animal motives.

The point I wish to make at this stage is that man is utterly unable to understand even those animals who are only his first, second, or third cousins. Take, for example, the horse, an animal supposed to be loved, cherished and understood by man. But ask the horse; he may have something different to say. Has any man ever even thought of taking the opinion of the horse before writing lyrically about the faithfulness of that noble animal? That is just human—to judge the world by his own primitive standard. Anyone that is useful to him, is praised. Man's love for the horse is but the love for himself. If anyone really loved his horse, could he practise the brutality of making the beloved animal run with the loving master sitting proudly on his back? Or make him or her run races, often at the risk of limbs and life, so that the owner may acquire the distinction of having won some coveted trophy? It may be asked, why then do the horses appear to be pleased at the cruelties and humiliation they are subjected to by their loving masters? Well, you may just as well ask the German people as to why they all enthusiastically voted for Hitler, whose declared object is to degrade an enlightened nation to medieval barbarism. The German people as well as the pampered horses would very likely give the puzzling reply: Do we, really? The one submits no more enthusiastically to the loving cruelties of the master than the other goose-steps at the noisy strain of brass bands and give the Roman salute exclaiming: Heil Hitler! In both the cases, it begins with coercion, and continues as slavish habit which, however, ill conceals the underlying resentment.

The quaint custom of cow worship has been rationalized by the modern Hindu intellectual. It has been appreciated even by critical people as the picturesque expression of a noble sentiment. I do not propose to enter into any controversy. I only desire to suggest that one should approach the subject from the point of view of an actual problem and practical necessity. All progressive Indians, particularly those with nationalist inclinations (progressiveness and nationalism are not inseparable), agree that Hindu–Muslim unity is a condition for the social and national advancement of the Indian people. But how many of them have seriously and critically tried to ascertain the concrete obstacles to the much desired unity?

Apart from historical causes of indirect nature, which are not spontaneously operative as far as the large bulk of the population is concerned, the main bone of contention is the cow. It would be difficult to find any other single direct cause which contributes more to the communal tension. I should not be accused of extravagance if I said that the choice before the Hindu today is between the venerable custom of worshipping the *gomata* and continued national subjugation. Looked at from this point of view, cow-worship does not appear to be a typically Indian expression of idealism; it is found to be a stout link in the chain of national slavery.

All antiquated social institutions and religious prejudices have the same sinister significance; and cow worship is a superstition. Instead of misapplying their intelligence to the task of rationalizing institutions which have lost all social usefulness, young Indians should develop the faculty of criticism.

Let us dwell a little longer on this very familiar topic of cow worship. No rational man would maintain that there is really any particular godliness in this particular animal. If it were really a question of seeing the World–Soul in every form of life, why did the *rishi*s pick out one particular species to be the object of their pantheistic devotion? When the typical Hindu attitude towards animals is observed, little of pantheism is detected. I happen to know it from personal experience. The old-fashioned Hindu has a strong antipathy for my race; and the greater the orthodoxy, that is religiosity, the greater the antipathy. The best part of my short life has been lived in close touch with many Hindus of average orthodoxy. The treatments I received from them would have made my life a hell, had there not been other factors for compensation. And you would be surprised to know the reason for that attitude. I myself, with all my cynicism and sophistication, would scarcely believe it, had I not heard it many time over with my own ears. The cats are considered to be bad animals, worthy not even of ordinary kindness, not to mention worship, because they are *not useful*—literally, as I have heard said so often, 'one can have no benefit out of them'.

After this experience, could I be expected to take the rationalized version of cow worship seriously? There is a whole series of animals which are believed to be impure by the orthodox Hindu. If the Hindus really have a pantheistic attitude towards all forms of life, there should be no such anomaly in their practical behaviour. Cow worship is not an expression of pantheism; it is the outcome of a utilitarian philosophy. Indeed, there is no philosophy about it. It is a matter of material necessity. An interesting sidelight on the spiritualist culture of India!

How did the cow secure a place in the Hindu pantheon? That is a question of the history (and also of the philosophy) of religion. It is beyond the intellectual depth of a modest cat to attempt an investigation in that line; nor would it be quite relevant. Nevertheless while at it, I cannot resist the temptation of hazarding an opinion.

I think that the only rational answer to the question should be obvious to a critical thinker. The curious custom was the product of a social necessity. Once upon a time, cattle must have been rather scarce in India. Indeed, topographical and climatic conditions of the country are not very suitable for a healthy growth of the bovine species. Even today in India, cattle, while numerous, are generally of an inferior kind with a marked tendency to deteriorate. They cannot thrive only on rank vegetation. They require highlands and the dry cold air associated with such region. The inhabitants of the Central Asiatic plateau were pastoral people, because the country was very suitable for breeding cattle. When a tide of immigration from Central Asia swept over the Hindu Kush and reached the plains of Northern India, not many cattle could accompany it. The road was too difficult and cold for bovine animals. The nomads from Central Asia were used to place the highest value on cattle. The treasure was scarce in the new country. Naturally, there was a general anxiety to preserve the few there were. On the other hand, the Aryans were meat-eating people. So, there was the danger of the few available cattle being eaten up soon. The original Hindu scriptures (not the comparatively modern, mostly post-Buddhist, rationalist texts) are full of evidence to the effect that beef was an usual article of food. The intellectual heritage of India was the creation of beef-eating and *soma*-(a kind of alcoholic beverage) drinking *rishis*. But in the new country, the nomadic immigrants became gradually civilized. They abandoned the nomadic life, and took to the cultivation of the soil. Although the conquered natives were forced to perform all productive labour, yet, cattle were found to be valuable for the purpose. An ox could be more useful socially as a means of production, that is, as a beast of burden, than as an article for consumption. Utility was transformed into divinity. Backward peoples can think only in terms of religion. The members of the bovine species were spared outright slaughter only to be condemned to lifelong toil for the benefit of man. The cow was spared her flesh and raised to the honoured rank of Mother; for the advantage, she was to give up her own children to slavery to the lust of man. It would be highly interesting to know what would the bovine animal prefer—to be slaughtered all at once, or condemned to lifelong toil. Having regard for the fact that cattle raised as [an] article for consumption are well fed and taken care of, one would surmise their choice. I, for example, should make no mistake, and presume that, given the choice, my bovine cousins would be equally wise. A short comfortable life is immensely preferable to endless years of dreary toil.

But I wish to distribute the blame equitably. The bovine animals suffer also for their own foolishness of allowing themselves to be domesticated. They proved useful to man, and man with his superior cunning has been making use of them. We cats, for example, are wise not to be useful. The devout Hindu, therefore, hates us, denies us any share of the divine spirit believed to be present in all forms of life. But we are free; and there is nothing more divine than freedom. I wish you orthodox Hindus to realize this homely truth. That will do your souls no end of good.

Neither does my sense of justice permit me to blame the Hindus for sparing the cow her flesh in return for the perpetual slavery of her progeny. There was no ethical question involved. It was a matter of social necessity. Slavery of man as well as of animals has been the foundation of all antique civilizations. There would be no Greek culture without the institution of slavery. There would be no Brahmanic wisdom without the *Shudras*. The only thing that any reasonable person is likely to find objectionable is the effort of the modern Hindu intellectuals to rationalize the custom. . . .

If any religion sanctions the eating of some sort of meat, there is absolutely no reason to prohibit a particular kind. If to eat meat is bad for body and soul, goat's meat should not be differently treated from beef. Total vegetarianism, preached and practised only by certain Hindu sects and castes, is no more reasonable. It may be justified by the dogma of the three *gunas*; but scientifically, that is all nonsense. There is little difference between meat and vegetable in the strict chemical sense; and the influence of food on [the] body as well as on mind (also on [the] soul, supposing there is any) is to be judged from its chemical composition. The nourishment required by the human body must be composed of certain chemicals in certain quantities. You must have that, no matter what you eat—beef or ghee or boiled banana. The physical system of the pure vegetarian, if it is kept in proper condition, takes in, of necessity, exactly the same quantities of the same chemical stuffs as taken by one living on meat. The ability to digest and assimilate is a question of habit. As a matter of fact, common people, forced by tradition and religious prejudice to live on a purely vegetarian diet, as is the case in many parts of India, are likely to be intellectually dull and physically deteriorated. In order to get the minimum quantity of carbohydrate and protein, required indispensably by a normal human system, one must eat such a large quantity of rice, gram, or maize, that the digestive function consumes more energy than normally assigned to it. In consequence, mental activities are dulled. Milk products in sufficient amount, high-class grains, and vegetables, fruits, which may provide the necessary nourishment *economically*, that is, without much misuse of energy, are not available to the great masses of the people, who are therefore generally undernourished, and mentally dull owing to the necessity of using greater energy for securing an inadequate nutrition from a large bulk of trash they eat. Repudiation of the cult of vegetarianism is a condition for the physical improvement and intellectual awakening of the Indian masses. Let this insignificant member of a carnivorous species tell you:

Eat more meat; that is a highroad to the salvation of your precious souls. One lesson you shall learn from the story of my life is that carnivorous animals are never quite domesticated; that is, voluntary slavery, so highly praised as virtue in the herbivorous bovine species, is detestable to us.

Let me revert to the main current of my story. The power of articulated speech separates man from the rest of the animal world. It makes possible the process of intellectual development of which man is so very proud. But there is another side of the picture. Prejudice and hypocrisy result from the power of speech, and they are effective checks upon real intellectual development.

Originally, language evolved as the medium for expressing emotions, and later on, ideas. Eventually, the original relation was reversed: Language became a fetter upon the freedom of feelings and ideas. Human mind became conventionalized. It came to be dominated by terms. Nothing has been so harmful for the spiritual development of man than the tyranny of words. Take the Holy Scriptures (of any religion), for example. These collections of words teach man to falsify his feelings, that is, to be hypocritical to himself; to hide his emotions, that is, to turn life into a huge lie; and to abjure the freedom of thought. One cannot think freely for himself, and believe at the same time—in the religious sense. God is substituted by the name of God. The great bulk of the Hindu population devoutly believe in the spiritual efficacy of the habit of exclaiming: 'Ram Ram' or 'Hari Hari' or 'Shiva Shiva.' I have heard any number of grown-up people expatiating upon the common cant that dharma is the essence of life. But ask them what is dharma; hardly one in a thousand has any definite notion about what the so freely and frequently used term stands for. It is a word, and millions of people have forfeited the most rudimentary faculty of thought under the tyranny of words. Even when the word dharma is associated with some concrete meaning, it only stands for a body of superstitions, prejudices, social customs, and irrational modes of living. These again are not uniform They vary from place to place, and from sect to sect. But if you ask why these customs are observed or why such and such ceremonies are performed, the answer is that they are prescribed by dharma. So, we come back to the question: What is dharma? The entire human existence is dominated by a meaningless word or indefinable term. . . .

I know all about the specious definitions of the term dharma. But that is rationalization—to make a prejudice appear reasonable and even necessary. The definition most favoured by the modern Hindu intellectual is: Dharma is that which supports the world (human society). But who is to decide what supports the world? For the religious, this question is irrelevant. The decision has been made once for all. It is recorded in the Scriptures. Follow the scriptural injunctions, and all will be well.

Again, we are back to words. To get out of this vicious circle, Hinduism teaches that, in the beginning, there was the word. (Christianity also says the same thing). The mystic symbol and sound OM is believed to be the foundation of language, and therefore to contain the essence of truth. It is highly interesting to note that it can bardly be classified as a part of articulated speech. It is a sound which can be made by other animals than man. My mighty nephew, for instance, makes it to the terror of man. But the modern rationalizer (not rationalist) is there to protest against this profanity. He says that 'OM' is a composite sound: A plus U plus M. Granted this is so, it is difficult to understand how the situation is improved. What the theory proves, if it proves anything, is that this sound originated with such primitive human beings as spoke a language only with two vowels and one consonant.

Why should one be spiritually elevated simply by repeating this half-articulated sound? Why 'Mew Mew' should not serve the same purpose for me? How can a meaningless syllable be the mystic emblem of the impersonal God? How can one have religious feeling through the preposterous habit of imitating the sound while belching lustily after a huge meal? All these and innumerable other questions of kindred nature can be silenced by the tyranny of words. Don't think, but believe—that is the doctrine for the propagation of which language was useful in the earlier stages of human development; and by far the greater bulk of mankind is still languishing in those stages of mental slavery imposed by the development of articulated speech. India is still far away from the freedom from the tyranny of '*Vakya Brahma*'.

Take, for example, your nationalist movement as represented by the Congress. It is dominated by a bunch of words and terms—Swaraj, non-cooperation, non-violence, sacrifice, suffering. To this already rich quasi-moral political vocabulary, some terms of pure metaphysics have been added, the most notable being truth. Every Congressman swears to practice truth and non-violence in thought, word, and deed. It is generally believed that these ethical terms and metaphysical concepts endow Indian nationalism with a spiritual halo. Everybody repeats these terms, but few stop to think what they really mean.

Congressmen denounce constitutionalism, but are proud of their staunch adherence to the doctrine of non-violence. It is surprising that none sees the crass contradiction involved is this attitude. If you really want national independence, and are honestly convinced that constitutional methods cannot lead you to the goal, you are logically committed to adopt methods which, from the point of view of the established authority, must be unconstitutional. In other words, the Congressman is a believer in violence and non-violence at the same time! Side by side with non-violence, the word revolution has also been included in the Congress jargon. Nothing is more ridiculous than to shout those two words in the selfsame breath. The Congressman, nevertheless, does it, and to justify this remarkable performance, has invented the legend of a 'peaceful or bloodless revolution'. No use telling him that such a phenomenon has never happened in history. He retorts with arrogant conviction that India will set the example. What he really does, however, is to betray his ignorance of the theory and practice of revolution, and of the history of the revolutionary movements of the world throughout the ages. But he is concerned with words—not with what the words stand for. He would, if he possibly could, put India back under the village economy of medieval feudal–patriarchalism, and triumphantly call that a revolution! It is the word that counts.

The tyranny of the word 'truth' is even worse. No other word in the human vocabulary is so undefinable. Yet, it has become a fashionable slogan with the Congressman. He no doubt feels morally elevated when he takes the vow of truth. But he never inquires about the nature of the goddess he swears allegiance to. What is truth? I challenge any devotee of the goddess to answer this simple question.

When I am hungry, it is unquestionably true that I am hungry; nature testifies to it. I see a bowl of milk, and lap it up without taking the trouble of asking the permission of the owner. Besides, there is very little chance of the permission being granted even if solicited. So, here is another truth; most human beings, with all their claim to moral superiority, are not inclined to sacrifice in favour of a hungry animal, unless this is useful to them. Now, how would you characterize my act of lapping up the bowl of milk without the owner's permission? It is stealing—an evidence of moral depravity ascribed to my species. But do you ever stop to think that this act of moral depravity is committed in a situation brought about by the combination of two truths?

In order to wiggle out of this uncomfortable fix, you have invented other moral dogmas—another set of meaningless words. You preach self control and sacrifice. I must learn to control my carnal desires, so that I might resist the temptation of stealing even when hungry. But the real motive behind this moral doctrine is not to cure me of my depravity, but to find a safeguard for the bowls of milk belonging to men.

Besides, you are so blinded by the anxiety to protect the privileges of your race, that you set up a moral doctrine which strikes at the root of all morals which is religion. If it were sinful to eat when hungry, God would have made animals differently—without stomachs. Hunger is, therefore, God-given. To satisfy it is to obey the law of Providence. To starve rather than to steal the milk, which would most probably never be given voluntarily, therefore, does not constitute a virtue—of self-control; it is committing the sacrilege of proposing to make the world better than God has created it. This amounts to a denial of God. Because, if you really believe in God, you can never think that things could be otherwise than made by him. Any such though implies atheism and strikes at the root of dogmatic ethics which has kept the human race enslaved through ages.

As regards the other moral virtues—sacrifice; don't you think it would be more appropriate to preach it to the owner of the bowl of milk? By addressing the sermon to me, you are again safeguarding the bowl of milk for its owner who has misappropriated it from the calf. . . .

Whenever I chance upon a bowl of milk, a very rare occurrence in the world I am condemned to live in, owing to some crime committed in a previous life, or a sheer whim on the part of my parents, my first impulse is to go straight at it. I am not ashamed of this impulse because it is a law of my physical being. Borrowing from the human language, I can say that it is a part of the providential arrangement which has made me a cat. If the Providence thought that such an impulse is bad, that it mars the harmony of his dispensation, he surely could have easily left it out of my system. In short, when I obey the impulse to steal, I simply act according to the will of God. I am sure that any normal human being feels a similar impulse in an analogous situation. If he usually appears to control the impulse, that is not because of any moral superiority, but simply because of cowardice. He is either afraid of others calling, and even punishing, him as a thief, or he is ashamed of himself. In the latter case, it is worse.

However it may be with human beings, I know no inhibition, and therefore look upon the rarely available bowl of milk as God-sent, and lap it up with no moral scruple, although with the fear of being beaten. What else could I do? From experience I know that my chance of getting it by truthful, legal, and peaceful means, that is, by begging from the owner, is less than one to ten. On the contrary, the chance is very much greater if I follow the sovereign truth of my God-given impulse, and let legality and peace go by the board. I violate the law when I drink the milk, seldom to be had for asking, without the permission of the owner. If I had the misfortune of being a member of the barbarous institution called civilized human society, I would be punished, if caught, which seldom happens to those who can steal cleverly. My prosecutor's logic is simple. The milk did not belong to me; therefore, I had no right to drink it even if I died of hunger. They are indifferent to that possible tragedy.

Possession is nine points in law. I wonder how many people stop to think that man-made laws are always violating the laws of God. Stealing is also violence. It is only a milder form of robbery. But the queer thing is that, if you go a step farther, black becomes white. Conquest is robbery on a large scale; yet that has not been placed under a moral taboo or the penalty of any law. Today the Indians decry conquest, because they are the victims. All the moral cants preached on that score are entirely unconvincing. No sensible man can possibly believe that non-violence is inherent in Hindu humanitarianism, so long as Rama, Krishna, Arjun, Bhim, etc. remain the ideals of Hindu manhood. Those mythical heroes are glorified for their feats of conquest and acts of wholesale violence. Those very Indians who condemn the conquest of one people by another, nevertheless prove the greatness of their forefathers on the strength of their overseas dominions. Stealing being a modest form of conquest is, of course, an act of violence, but precisely for that very reason, it is creditable and a matter of pride. If everybody had the moral courage to steal, there would be no thief in the world.

To return to the point. If I act under the first impulse, that is, under the law of my being, I am usually successful in satisfying my hunger. The inference is that to act so represents a correct judgement of the situation. I might act differently, solicit the owner's permission. The first difficulty is the inability of man to understand me. As soon as I say: 'Mew Mew', he drives me away without any consideration of what I might want. He does not stop to think that an animal also becomes hungry and must satisfy it by hook or crook. He also acts under impulse; but his impulse is not natural like mine. It is conditioned. He acts automatically to defend his bowl of milk against my depredation. He was not born with the bowl of milk. It is not a part of his physical being as hunger, or desire, if you like, is mine. Hunger or desire is God-given. If you are religious, or believe in the teleological view of the world, you cannot deny this without contradicting your faith or philosophy. Any physical impulse is God-given. Property, on the contrary, is acquired by man himself. My relation to the bowl of milk is providentially ordained; the owner's is guaranteed by man-made law; it is an artificial obstacle to the free realization of Divine Will.

In the first place, the milk belongs to some cow; secondly, it has come to the possession of the man through the privation of its natural and rightful receiver—the calf. Thus, the ownership of the bowl of milk has been acquired through violence committed against the maternal feeling of the cow and the physical necessity of the calf. Thirdly, for the time being, it was not needed by the man. For all these and other subsidiary considerations, I am more justified in stealing it (I use this incorrect term in the absence of a more appropriate one) than the man in guarding it against my attack.

But the vast bulk of mankind, notwithstanding their superior intelligence, are debarred from taking this sane view of the situation. They can think only in terms of words. Originally, words were names given to things, emotions, feelings, relations, ideas. In course of time, names assumed independence of what they originally stood for. The empty words were woven into a net in which human mind was caught.

This is a topic of such an absorbing interest and supreme importance that no apology is needed for my dwelling upon it still a little longer. Language has been always used, and it is used even today to a great extent, not as the medium for the expression of emotions, but to hide or rationalize emotions.

Sexual attraction is a fundamental attribute of higher organisms. Thanks to the power of articulated speech, human beings invented a word for it—love. Eventually, the word 'love' came to mean all sorts of imaginary sentiments; its real sense was lost in a cloud of hypocrisy and lie. The foolishness went to the extent of declaring that love is a spiritual sentiment; to connect it with sexual attraction is to debase it. But however much he may moralize, man can never run away from his own shadow, so to say. Sex impulse is a basic law of his or her being. It must be satisfied. As a matter of fact, the law of physical being is obeyed, biological necessity is complied with; but it is done hypocritically. Man has become ashamed of himself.

The veil of hypocrisy which hides, and unsuccessfully tries to suppress, the natural inclination for the joy of sex-life, is again woven out or words. The word *brahmacharya* occupies the centre of the travesty of hypocrisy. Under the prejudice represented by this word, the deluded honest are driven into a losing battle against the sovereign authority of nature. A battle that can never be won can be kept up only through the employment of sham, subterfuge, and camouflage. One is obliged to practise lie and hypocrisy in order to purify his physical being and to attain high intellectual powers! One cannot lay claim to any spiritual attainment unless he believes in, and pretends to practise, *brahmacharya*. You must believe in the word, even if you experience the impossibility of practising it. The tyranny of one single word does not permit you to be frank. Anyone with some knowledge about the construction and function of the human body, will tell you that sex-intercourse within certain limits does no harm. The fluid discharged in that act does not contribute to any extraordinary physical power through its hypothetical retention. Indeed, the retention is positively harmful for the adult. The sperm has a specific function in organic mechanism—to fertilize the ovum. It serves no other purpose. Modern psychology has discovered that active suppression or subconscious inhibition of the sex impulse is the cause of grave mental derangements. Strange road to high intellectual powers! . . .

The heroes and heroines of Indian fiction are pictures of falsehood; because they do not correspond to anything which really exists in this mortal world. The predominating theme of Indian literature is love, which is depicted in such a way that it has nothing to do with the real emotion. Even the delightfully sexual lyrics of Vidyapati, Chandidas, Jaydev, and even of Rabindranath of our own days, are interpreted as mystic accounts of spiritual elevation; of an erotic communion with the impersonal God! The legendary tales of the philanderings of a youthful cowherd and the delicious abandon of the milkmaids, jolted out of all inhibition by the flood of tropical spring, are given a dull scriptural value, and even a philosophical content is read in them—mutual attraction between *jeevatma* and *paramatma*. The realities of life are still taboo in Indian literature, which is saturated with vapid romanticism, sloppy sentimentality, and love degraded to a hypocritical spiritual experience. . . .

Don't pretend to be something different from, and superior to, what you really are. Don't be ashamed of your animal nature, and the full glory of manhood and humanness will be yours. Run after the illusion of realizing the spiritual essence of man, and you will degrade yourself; for, in that case, you will be living a life of lie and hypocrisy.

Mentally as well as physically, the human being is dominated not by his consciousness, which is supposed to be the spark of divine light; all his thoughts as well as actions are determined by the 'Unconscious' which is the accumulated store of natural impulses. The heritage of the whole animal ancestry of man is deposited in that store. The mental or spiritual aspect of human being is like an iceberg: Only a small part appears above the level of consciousness, the rest remaining submerged in the Unconscious. This remainder, which is called the unconscious mind, or simply the Unconscious, is not only the larger, but the more important part of human personality. Emotions, consciously felt, ideas, consciously held, acts, consciously performed, all originate in the Unconscious, so that the Unconscious determines the content of consciousness. This being the case, the conscious part of human mind—that is, rationalized emotions, imaginary ideas, hypocritical acts—is a secondary factor; because its contents and functions are determined by forces lying deep down—in the essentially animal being of man.

This, in brief, is the view of the other prevalent school of modern psychology—psychoanalysis. According to this school of psychology, which has proved to be of great value for mental therapeutics, to discover, and allow unrestricted expression to the animal impulses hidden in the dark region of the Unconscious, is the only way to a normal spiritual life. Natural impulses are allowed to appear in the realm of consciousness only after they have gone through the process of 'sublimation'. What is called conscience acts as the censor, and would not permit civilized human beings to act according to the impulses inherent in their very existence, unless these are dressed up in the glittering garbs of hypocrisy and falsehood.

The Hindus have the symbol of *lingam*. Nothing bears out the Freudian theory of the libido more pointedly. The natural desire for the pleasure of sexual life is suppressed by the cult of *brahmacharya*; but nature takes her revenge. Sex instinct is one of the two sovereign factors of the higher forms of organic existence. It cannot be suppressed. So, it appears in the singular custom of worshipping the sex organ as the symbol of God. The sovereign power exacts homage as if with vengeance. Religious ceremonies and social institutions of the Hindus provide innumerable instances of the sublimation of natural impulses.

Since all the spiritual exploits of man—religious, artistic, moral—are ultimately governed by forces emanating from the Unconscious, that is, the storehouse of animal (biological) instincts, my venture into literature is not such an unnatural event as it may appear to be. . . .

Animals lower than man are supposed to be unable to think. This supposition is the result of man's vanity. Simply because we cannot express our thoughts through a coordinated system of articulated sounds, accessible to limited human understanding, man characteristically makes capital out of his ignorance and lays sole claim to the spiritual property of thought. Thinking, however, is a physical process—response to stimuli from outside. It is a matter of common observation that animals react to stimuli similarly as human beings do. The stimuli are transformed into ideas and emotions by physico–chemical processes taking place in the body. Anatomically and physiologically, human body differs only quantitatively from the bodies of animals next lower in the stages of organic evolution. The human nervous system is more complicated. Even this much cannot be stated with scientific accuracy. There is only one reliable way to the knowledge of mental activity. It is the observation of bodily behaviour. The only bodily behaviour that distinguishes man from lower animals is speech, and speech is thinking aloud. But serious thinking is done silently. Chatterboxes are generally light-hearted and empty-headed. As the wise old saying goes, silence is golden. When a man sits with his legs crossed in a very uncomfortable posture, his eyes shut or turned towards the navel, he is believed to be merged in deep meditation of the most exalting significance. How do you know that I am not engaged in some sort of revealing spiritual exercise when I sit with all fours drawn under my belly, my eyes shut not in sleep, but in a meditative mood? If you have the patience and power of observation; and (this is of more importance) if you can for a moment get over human egocentrism, you may find in my countenances signs of sublimation as are imagined to be associated only with sadhus, particularly when these have their brains dulled with the spiritualising fume of *ganja*. I also appear more contented, more suffused with the spiritual light shining within myself, when I have had a good drink of milk, voluntarily given or cleverly stolen; a juicy morsel of new meat. A mouse or a squirrel, for example, does the trick even better.

Indeed, we cats are naturally given to philosophizing, because we can observe human life from very close quarters. We become more meditative, the less we have to bother about procuring food. Leisure is a condition for greater spiritual activity. This socio–biological law is equally applicable to us. Hindus particularly should concede our spiritual superiority. They practise occasional *maun* to recuperate spiritual energy exhausted in daily talks. Our whole life is engaged in that *tapasya*. It is a blessing in disguise that we are physiologically (not providentially) debarred from giving our mental activity articulated forms. This physiological deficiency guarantees us the spiritual freedom lost by man.

Except speech, practically all other physical actions are identical with men and animals. Identical physical behaviour must be produced by mental activities of similar nature. So, only the superstition, that a soul resides in human body as the source of all spiritul activities, denies power of thought on the part of lower animals.

As regards the other branch of spiritual life, namely, emotions, modern physiology traces them to the secretion of chemical fluids from the ductless glands. These glands are not only common to all higher biological forms, including man, but are actually transplantable. Practically all the intellectual and emotional activities are produced by the secretion from the thyroid glands. When these don't function well, they can be artificially stimulated to secrete the 'spiritual' fluid (which is chemical, in reality) by the injection of thyrodine extract prepared from the corresponding glands in the body of some animal standing near to man in the scale of biological evolution. Modern surgery has gone farther. Not only is the human body rejuvenated through the grafting of thyroid glands taken from some lower animal; the operation cures mental and emotional exhaustion as well. Another set of emotions is connected with the pituitary glands. As injection of the serum prepared from this gland belonging to animals produces in man fear, with all the bodily behaviour associated with this emotion.

All these and many other observed facts and experimental results have definitely led to the conclusion that spiritual properties are functions of the brain and of the central nervous system connected with it. Since a long series of biological forms lower than man are also possessed of these physical organs of spiritual activity, they cannot be denied the credit of the activity itself. This view is held by practically all the biologists and educated medical men of today. . . .

Finally, this unprecedented literary venture is justified by the exigency of social protest. Great works of literature are inspired by a spirit of revolt against social institutions and traditional ideas supporting them. Modern Indian literature is as yet practically untouched by such a spirit. But it is the crying need of the day. If literature is to contribute its share to the much belated Indian Renaissance, it must expose the rottenness of social life, the falsity of popular notions, the ridiculousness of time-honoured institutions, instead of idealizing them. Cases of revolt there are in plenty. It is remarkable that they are not discovered even by writers with a tendency to social reform. Nationalist preoccupation debars even the educated youth from a critical approach to social problems. Nationalism is a typically human virtue or vice. I am free from it. Animals and human beings deprived of human comforts and culture, as the majority of them are in India, are naturally indifferent to the empty ideals of nationalism. Therefore, my literary venture may serve the purpose of introducing into modern Indian literature the spirit of criticism which will enlighten it, bring it in touch with the realities of life, and therefore raise it above the present level of idealistic platitude, stale romanticism, vapid sentimentality, and sanctimonious moralizing. I call upon young India to revolt not against the cruel treatment meted out to me, but against the foulness, falseness, hypocrisy that vitiate. Indian social life and block the road to progress. As I have no reason to justify human action, I have spoken frankly about the degusting and ridiculous traits of human beings, who entered into the narrow circle of my lowly life. I hope that, by bringing these traits in a sharp relief, the story of my life will provoke the reader to focus his or her attention on them, and to trace them into their social subsoil. I don't pretend to produce a great literary work. But by sounding the note of social protest, laying bare some of the causes of social revolt, my modest effort may serve as an impetus to the production of such works by others more qualified for the task.

Fragments of a Prisoner's Diary Vol. 2
Selections from
INDIA'S MESSAGE

II Psychology of the Seer

Introductory editorial note

India's Message was published as a book in 1950 by Renaissance Publishers, Calcutta, and consisted of six chapters under the following captions: 1. The Transmigration of Soul 2. Psychology of the Seer 3. The Ideology of Orthodox Nationalism 4. Marx or Manu 5. India's Message 6. Preconditions of Indian Renaissance. Of this six chapters the first two had been included earlier in another collection of Roy's essays published in 1940 and entitled *Science and Superstition*, by Indian Renaissance Association, Dehra Dun. Actually, Roy removed all these chapters or essays from the Prison Manuscripts and slightly edited them on his release from jail before publishing them either in his weekly *Independent India* or in the form of books. *India's Message*, when it was published in 1950, constituted Volume II of *Fragments of a Prisoner's Diary*, volume I being *The Memoirs of a Cat* (subsequently enlarged under the title *Crime and Karma: Cats and Women*), and Volume III being *Letters from Jail*.

The chapters brought together in the book *India's Message* are, in their draft form, scattered over several volumes (IV, VII, IX) of the Prison Manuscripts. From both the letters from jail and various entries in the Prison Manuscripts it is clear that Roy wanted to write a comprehensive work in three volumes under the general title 'Philosophy, Religion and Science' (Prison Manuscripts Vol. 4, p. 2; Vol. 7, p. 1), of which the third volume was provisionally entitled 'Social Significance of Spiritualism'. Volume 2 which was to be devoted to 'The Philosophical Consequences of Modern Science' was to have eleven chapters, while Volume 3 was to have six. The comprehensive work, as planned, was never completed, but a very substantial body of notes was made during the prison years, and much of this material was edited, rearranged, and published by Roy as books and essays after his release from jail. What might have gone into Volumes 1 and 2 of the projected work provided material for such books as *Materialism* and *Science and Philosophy*. According to the draft outline of the project given in Volume 7 of the Prison Manuscripts, the last volume of the projected work would have contained the following chapters: 1. The Decline of the West 2. Indian Mysticism and Western Idealism 3. The Philosophy of the Geeta 4. Sanatan Dharma 5. Gandhism 6. Civilization and Culture. The essays contained in the first two volumes of the *Fragments of a Prisoner's Diary* cover part of the ground of the projected Volume 3 of 'Philosophy, Religion and Science'.

In his 'Preface' to the revised and enlarged 1950 edition of *India's Message*, Roy indicated the theme and purpose of these essays: 'The belief in India's spiritual message to the materialist West is a heady wine', he wrote:

> It is time to realize that the pleasant inebriation offered a solace to proud intellectuals with inferiority complex. The legacy of that psychological aggressiveness is not an asset, but a liability. A critical examination of what is cherished as India's cultural heritage will enable the Indian people to cast off the chilly grip of a dead past. It will embolden them to face the ugly realities of a living present and look forward to a better, a brighter, and pleasanter future.

In *India's Message*, *Crime and Karma* and *The Ideal of Indian Womanhood*, Roy offered a radical critique of Hindu religion and tradition, and of Indian society and culture; he analysed the failure of the educated sections of the community to free the people or even themselves from prejudice, obscurantism, and anachronistic beliefs and customs. He was trying to do in these essays what Voltaire, Diderot, and the philosophical radicals had tried to do in eighteenth century France, or Herzen and the radical intelligentsia of Russia in the nineteenth century. Roy pleaded for a 'philosophical revolution' or a cultural renaissance to bring about a socio–political and economic revolution in India. 'A criticism of religious thought, subjection of traditional beliefs, and the time-honoured dogmas of religion to a searching analysis', he wrote in the Preface, 'is a condition for the belated Renaissance of India. The spirit of enquiry should overwhelm the respect for tradition. The essays collected in this volume are expected to quicken that spirit.' The value and urgency of such a critique and of that spirit of enquiry would seem to be as great today as when these pages were written behind bars.

Considerations of space, and also because selections from *Crime and Karma* and *The Ideal of Indian Womanhood* are also included in this volume, have inclined me to limit my choice to chapter two of *India's Message*, devoted to an exposure of the 'Psychology of the Seer'.

SNR.

II Psychology of the Seer

Religiosity is not an Indian monopoly. It is more widespread in this country than in others because in no other civilized country the masses are so very ignorant. Ignorance and religiosity are causally connected. Besides, what is called naturally religious temperament, is really a cultivated habit. Therefore, it may persist even in educated people capable of casting off superstitious beliefs if they want. Nor is it a matter of voluntary choice. It is a psychological phenomenon which has an interesting history. Soul, mind, or personality is not a static entity. Like any other empirical reality, it also has a natural history. At any given moment, it is a sum total of past experience, the major portion of which, however, remains subconscious. Emotional or spiritual life is largely dominated by impressions and impulses buried in the subconscious mind. Hence the mystic nature of the psychic phenomena.

About the time that the story of Shanti Devi was widely advertised as the knock-out blow to the scientific disbelief in the doctrine of reincarnation,* I read in an American periodical the account of a 'religious experience'. In that case also, the subject was a girl of that accursed land of rank materialism. Nevertheless, the account shows how religious temperament can be cultivated, and that mystic religious experiences result from preconceived notions, being nothing more mysterious than auto-hypnosis. Such experiences are familiar phenomena in India. But they are seldom observed critically and recorded as data for psychological or psychiatrical investigation. Superstition reads in them manifestations of the supernatural; and they reinforce the religiosity, not only of the uneducated credulous, but often of the learned sceptic.

The account of the experience of the American girl is also an instance of superstition—a cultivated habit of religiosity. But taking place in a social atmosphere different from that of India, the event was scientifically explained. Nevertheless, in the face of a scientific explanation of the phenomenon, the cultivated religiosity of the girl and others of similar temperament remained unmoved in its blind faith. Therefore, I shall record the account as an appendix to the criticism of the 'scientific verification' of Shanti Devi's story.

---

* The story of Santi Devi, the nine year old Brahmin girl of Mathura, who claimed to remember her so-called 'former life'—that is, her life as a married woman before she was born nine years ago—was analysed in critical detail in the first chapter of *India's Message*, and exposed to be a mixture of delusion, fraud, and irrational popular belief. SNR.

A middle-aged worker of the Ford Motor Works went to a Revivalist meeting with his wife and seventeen year-old daughter. The entire family belonged to the congregation. For that particular meeting, the text of the Evangelist sermon was: 'I will pour out my spirit in the last days, and the young men shall prophesy and the young women shall dream dreams.'

It was a winter evening, wet and cold. The parents were reluctant to take along the girl who was of weak constitution, having had three attacks of pneumonia. But the girl would not miss the meeting because she *believed* that it was going to be a great occasion for her. She had made that enthusiastic declaration on the way to the church. Evidently, she was determined to catch the spirit of God and 'dream dreams'.

As soon as the preacher roused the congregation to a frenzy, usual in such Revivalist meetings, the girl rushed up to the altar and collapsed there in a heap. She was in a trance, described variously in different religions, as beatitude, *samadhi*, *dasha*, etc. Throughout the night, the whole congregation remained in the church and prayed in pious ecstasy. Finally, the unconscious girl was carried home. There, she lay in her trance day after day. The parents declined to take her to the hospital. They firmly believed that the girl was having a communion with God. The proud father exclaimed that the state of the girl was produced by the death of the sinful nature of the body.

Physicians, however, came to ascertain that the life of the girl was not in danger. On examination, no alarming symptoms were found. There was nothing wrong physiologically—the pulse was normal, reflexes satisfactory. But psychiatrists ascertained that *psychologically* (as distinct from purely physical reflex actions), the girl responded only to religious stimuli. For example, when a prayerful hymn was sung, the girl's pulsation increased; on being asked if she loved God or was with him, there was a faint smile on her otherwise entirely expressionless face. Responding to the priest's call for a fervent prayer, the girl's rigid arms shot up in a supplicating posture, while the rest of her body was irresponsive to any stimulus. She held her arms up in that posture for forty minutes, while all the conscious members of the congregation, though in ecstasy, got tired in ten minutes more or less, as any ordinary person would. That was a 'miracle' which was proclaimed by the priest to be a manifestation of the supernatural power attained through the communion with God. Members of the congregation, of course, believed it to be so, and kept on praying ecstatically.

On the sixth day, having been in that state of religious coma for [a] hundred and forty-three hours, the girl finally woke up to make the following declaration: 'I seemed to be standing on a cloud with the earth below me, and I had a glimpse of the Heaven. I saw God walking towards me on a white path.' She also claimed to have seen the recently dead little son of the priest, 'picking flowers along the path, dressed in pure white.'

Now, that was a mystic experience which, in this country, would naturally reinforce the religiosity not only of a small community, but of the entire population. The educated would read in it another irrefutable evidence of transcendental truth, and realities beyond the reach of scientific investigation. Disregarding her predisposition to auto-hypnosis, superstitious mentality, debilitated physical conditions conducive to abnormal neurotic state (hysteria), in short, her general spiritual backwardness, the girl would be hailed as a seer, a sadhu, a Free Spirit, and could easily assume the authority of a prophetess commanding a devoted following, if she were so disposed. And the band of her disciples would be composed mostly of educated people. For, with all their traditional religiosity, the ignorant masses are not *actively* religious. Not being at all bothered by the disturbing influence of modern education, even of the most rudimentary and superficial kind, they do not feel the necessity of rationalizing their faith. In modern countries, religion still thrives only in its appropriate atmosphere—among the ignorant, ill-educated, intellectually deficient, frustrated. There, religious mentality is cultivated only by those deprived of the benefit of modern education or dejected by defeat in the fierce struggle of life. In India, religious revivalism is rampant among the modern educated middle-class intellectuals. It is mostly by their effort that religious mentality is assiduously cultivated. Therefore, mystic experiences, authentic or fraudulent, which otherwise would be lost in the vast wilderness of mass superstition, receive so much publicity whenever they happen to come to the notice of the modern intelligentsia.

The scepticism of the talented young man, who became famous as Swami Vivekananda, was swept away by the claim of an illiterate person to mystic experience which, if subjected to a psychiatrical scrutiny, would be found to be of the nature of the experience of the American girl. In both cases, the claim is personal communion with God. Science has no difficulty in conceiving the sincerity of the claim in either case, and yet show that the experience takes place on the background of superstition and, therefore, though authentic *subjectively*, is not an experience of objective truth. It is mental anesthesia, self-hypnotism, or neurotic struggle with reality.

Predisposition is the condition for mystic experience. One can be so disposed constitutionally, that is to say, possessed of a mental make-up heavily loaded with preconceived notions. Neurotic condition conducive to the struggle against reality results from inhibition of physical impulses and suppression of normal mental activities. In apparently normal persons, the predisposition for mystic experience can be produced by hetero-suggestion. Even in such cases, the predisposition is there, congenitally, so to say. It is partially overwhelmed by reason. The wavering will to believe is reinforced by the claim to actual religious experience on the part of someone who easily does the rest by means of suggestion. In authentic cases of mystic initiation, the guru performs this function, of placing the disciple in the state of self-hypnotism. Latent predisposition is thus awakened.

The content of religious experience, whether spontaneous or attained through laborious practices, is imaginary. Interest is focussed upon a particular image to the exclusion of other objects claiming the attention of any normal person. There is, however, nothing mystic in the experiences; it is a psychological state, either produced spontaneously, or cultivated through the practice of auto-suggestion. Every psychological state can be reduced to a physiological state of the brain. Emotions are governed by internal secretions which, in their turn, are affected by emotional states. In psychological states, believed to be indications of religious experience, [the] conscious mind lapses into a coma; the ego visits the dreamland of the subconscious. Neurotic persons fall into mental coma spontaneously. Hysteria is not usually regarded as a religious experience but as disease. *Samadhi* is mental coma attained through practice. It is a form of hysteria. Visions seen in *samadhi*, therefore, are not more divine than the dreams of the neurotic or the hallucinations of hysteria. They are images of the seer's desires. One may 'see' whatever he wishes to see, provided that he has the faith necessary for the purpose. The village urchin 'sees' ghosts in every bush, because he believes in all the ghost stories he has heard all his life. To have mystic visions, one need only to disturb the normal operation of mind.

What is believed to be the attainment of a higher form of consciousness, experience of realities beyond the reach of [the] mind, is really a psychological reaction. It is either associated with given pathological conditions, as in the case of those suffering from hysteria, or produced by the canalization of mental activity on one particular interest. In either case, there is a temporary suspension, or coma, of cerebral functions in the neo-mental, intellectual area (cerebral cortex), psychological activity taking place then only in the paleo–mental, thalamic region (base of the brain). In other words, the more primitive, *biological*, functions of the nervous system gain predominance over what, in the absence of a more appropriate term, can be called purely mental activity. (This term is incorrect and misleading, because even the purest mental activity is expenditure of nervous energy, liberated either by external stimuli, or by the reciprocity of internal excitations.)

Rational activity takes place in the neo-mental region. When that part of the brain is in a state of coma, all intelligent control and guidance of psychological activity disappear. The ego is confronted with a chaotic kaleidoscope of stored-up images shifting under the influence of nervous reflexes and mutual excitations. The operation of reason and intelligence thus suspended, there is a return to [a] primitive (culturally as well as biologically) physiological state dominated by superstitions. Mental pictures, created by ignorance, appear as realities actually experienced. Inhibited physical impulses, suppressed desires, are sublimated into mystic images and spontaneous emotions (ecstasy).

So, in the state of beatitude, attained in religious experience, man sinks *intellectually* to a lower spiritual level, instead of rising high above the reach of consciousness. The theory is that all activity of [the] conscious mind must cease as condition for the realization of the superhuman in man. Now, modern physiology shows that cessation of the conscious mental activity is produced by a cerebral coma, and therefore is coincident with the relapse into a more primitive psychological state, wherein biological reflex action reigns supreme. In that state, man comes nearer to animal than God. The divine *shakti,* released by the suppression of the conscious mind, *really* is something which is neither divine nor mysterious. It is the life-force which man shares with all the members of the organic world; and that force is a form of physical energy. Man is spiritually superior to other living creatures because, in human organism, there appear psychological phenomena which transcend biological laws holding supreme mechanically throughout the animal and vegetable kingdoms. Before it becomes conscious, life is an *animal* force: not even human, much less divine.

If *shakti* is supposed to be something other than life, then it is a mere name—for nothing. It is a figment of imagination. Human organism does not possess any other empirical category of force than life and mind. The object of religious experience must be an empirical category; otherwise, it would be nonsense to talk of experience. While the yoga system differentiates life (*prana*) from the soul as well as from mind (*manas*), in the *Gita* they are identified. And all the different schools of Hindu philosophy are supposed to be coordinated in the *Gita*. In the second chapter, Krishna says: 'Life cannot slay; life cannot be slain.' Evidently, life here stands for soul. The following line makes it still clearer; therein identical qualifications are attributed to soul. 'The soul was never born; it shall never cease', etc., etc. Indeed, the idea of soul is animistic. Its existence is deduced from the vital phenomena. The divine *shakti*, therefore, is the same as life. Modern science has dispelled all mystery about the vital phenomena. *Shakti*, therefore, is animal force which in man develops the spiritual properties of reason and intelligence. Religious experience thus is the experience of the animal in man; only, thanks to pathological conditions, which must be created by practice if not existing spontaneously, animal instincts are sublimated. Superstition becomes revealed truth; mental images, born of ignorance, appear as supernatural realities; preconceived notions take concrete form; faith manufactures facts.

In an artificially produced subconscious state, the ego experiences the mechanistic operation of the force of life. Reflex actions of the nervous system, which constitute the foundation of mental life, are rather biological than psychological phenomena. If [the] conscious mind is to be regarded as the obstacle to man's experiencing the free flow of divine power in him, then, the identification of this with the animal force of intelligent life cannot be avoided. Intelligence differentiates man from the lower animal. It is the function of conscious mind. Suppression of the conscious mind, therefore, naturally leads to a subhuman, not [a] superhuman, psychological state. Super-consciousness is a fiction which really stands for subconsciousness.

Modern biology has outgrown the recrudescence of vitalist prejudice. Neither Bergson's *élan vital,* nor Driesch's *entelechy* is more of an empirical reality than the divine *shakti* of the Hindu mystic. 'Scientific' vitalism ascribes purposiveness, that is, intelligence, to life which is described as a mysterious impulse. There is absolutely no empirical evidence in support of the contention. All the evidence is to the contrary. Except in higher animals with developed brains, life operates as a blind impulse. Vitalism stands on a purely logical ground, having no ontological foundation. It argues that mental activity in higher animals proves that intelligence is inherent in the vital force. Even its logic is fallacious. It leads to infinite regress, unless one stops at Panpsychism or Pantheism, neither of which doctrines can claim scientific support. Besides, consistent Pantheism is inverted materialism. When the world is reduced to one single entity which can be interchangeably called matter or spirit, the distinction between body, mind, soul, intelligence, intuition, becomes meaningless. Religious experience presupposes dualism. Individual soul must free itself from the bondage of body, in order to feel its union with the world-spirit. The body could not be a bondage if it did not exist. The fallacy of its logic drives spiritualist monism to an absurd position. Shankaracharya declared Maya to be real! How could the world be real and unreal at the same time? Modern absolute idealism also takes up the same position. According to Bradley, 'appearances' are unreal, but they exist! There, then, exists something which is not spirit. That is a contradiction of the panpsychist or pantheist view. Vitalism is unsound even logically because it leads to this contradiction.

However, *even logically*, vitalism has no force as against evolutionary biology. The doctrine of emergence explains how consciousness appears as a 'novelty'. But the point is that, on the contention of vitalism itself, mind stands higher than intuition in the scale of spiritual evolution. Mind is the efflorescence of intelligence, which, the vitalists contend, is latent in life-impulse. In other words, mind is a higher form of the vital force—the highest so far reached. Maybe, still higher forms will be evolved. But for the moment, we don't know anything about that. For the present, the future can be visualized only in terms of greatly developed mental activity. So, the flow of *shakti*, that is experienced while conscious mental activities are suspended, is a manifestation of life-force lower than intelligence. If their is anything divine in the life-force, it should be more manifest on a higher level of life. Intelligence is the highest manifestation of whatever spiritual or mystic power there may be hidden in life. Lapse into the subconscious state of mind, therefore, cannot be regarded as spiritual elevation. It is a reaction, degeneration. Religious experience (*samadhi*, etc.) is a psychological derangement—an artificially created psycho-pathological condition. Only superstition can sublimate abnormality. The vision of the Seer or the ecstasy of the devotee is a psychiatrical phenomenon like the hallucination of the hysteric or trance of the spiritist medium.

The discovery of the cause and cure of nervous disorder throws much light on the mystery of religious experience. The famous French physician Charcot discovered the relation between hysteria and hypnosis. While treating cases of hysteria, he observed that hypnotized patients accepted without the slightest resistance any idea suggested to them. Further investigation disclosed the fact that the tendency to be influenced by suggested ideas was not produced by hypnosis. It is a characteristic symptom of hysteria. Normal persons, provided that they are so disposed, can also be hypnotized. But the mind of a hysterical patient is more open to suggestion than that of a normal person. Hypnosis is an artificially produced (as distinct from the pathological), more or less partial, coma of the conscious mind. Physiologically, mental activity is expenditure of nervous energy liberated by external stimuli or internal excitations. Under normal conditions, the mind is occupied with a variety of interests. The liberated energy is canalized in diverse directions. As expended energy is constantly replenished from the reserve put up by the cells of the nerve-tissues, there is a balance of cerebral functioning. Excessive concentration on one particular interest upsets the balance. One particular set of neurones consumes its whole reserve. Consequently, other parts of the brain are not excited internally, while excessive concentration upon one particular interest renders them incapable of feeling external stimuli. In the absence of external stimuli as well as internal excitations, energy is not liberated. There is a temporary suspension of cerebral activity, except of one particular set of neurones which itself is exhausted by using up its entire reserve of energy. Hypnosis produces such a state of partial coma, because the hypnotized person's attention is concentrated upon one particular interest. The hypnotic state is really a momentary case of hysteria artificially created. Therefore, even normal persons, under hypnosis, are also open to suggestions. Besides, they are 'normal' only apparently. They could not be hypnotized, that is, made to develop momentary symptoms of hysteria, unless so disposed. Evidently, the disposition itself should be regarded as a symptom of the tendency to hysteria. It is a fact that only weak-minded persons can be *consciously* hypnotized, although their weakness may not always be apparent.

Hysteria, or the tendency thereto, as evidenced by suggestibility, indicates congenital deterioration of the entire nervous system, including the brain. In other words, it is a sign of a hereditary mental degeneration. This conclusion, reached by Charcot, was reinforced by the investigations of Janet who found that hysterical patients could not have more than one idea at a time. That is a sign of mental deficiency. Rational thought is not possible in the absence of the association of ideas. Of course, hysterical symptoms occur also in people who are not mentally deficient—apparently. Even in those cases, the mind is predisposed to be obsessed with one idea. This is demonstrated by their suggestibility under hypnosis. The obsession with one idea, either 'normally' or under hypnosis, releases emotion to overwhelm intelligence. Because hysterical symptoms, developed in intelligent people, who appear to be mentally normal, cannot be traced to purely physical causes—to any specific defect of neural anatomy—therefore, they have been regarded by the religious as signs of mystic communion with God. But they can be explained psychologically as produced by the conflict of suppressed emotions; and emotions are biological phenomena. By digging into the subconscious parts of mental life, psychoanalysis reveals the causes of the phenomenon of 'mystic experience'. There is nothing mystic about it; that is to say, the content of such experience is not some supernatural force or transcendental truth; it is hallucination produced by the conflict of suppressed emotions.

On the other hand, *psychologically*, hysteria is auto-hypnosis. It is the result of a morbid occupation with some particular idea or emotion, to the exclusion of others. This reverse relation between hysteria and hypnosis was discovered by Liebault and Bernheim, who demonstrated that symptoms of hysteria could be produced in hypnotized persons. Charcot had ascertained that, while associated with all sorts of mental and physical disturbances, hysteria fundamentally was an emotional disorder. Modern physiology has discovered how emotion produces the physical symptoms of hysteria. Causing excessive liberation of nervous energy, too much to be used up in appropriate behaviour, strong emotions produce all sorts of physical disturbances, such as are recognized to be hysterical symptoms, and are believed to be the evidence of religious experience. Lapicque's investigations reveal emotions as purely physiological phenomena. An abnormal state of emotional excitement, which produces mental and physical symptoms of hysteria, is a state of auto-hypnosis because that state represents momentary suspension of normal cerebral activity, and, in cases of physical disturbance, of the entire nervous system.

Ordinarily, the mind, at any given moment, is occupied with a number of ideas checking and correcting each other. One of them may be the predominant. As a matter of fact, intense mental activity is concentration upon one single idea. Hence the exhaustion that follows. Intense mental activity means liberation and expenditure of a large amount of nervous energy. But except in rare cases of nervous breakdown, caused rather by physical debility than psychological disequilibrium, exhaustion from intense mental activity does not produce coma. Because rationalist thought always involves more than one idea, it is never concentrated upon one single interest. The very essence of rationalism is the checking and correlation of an idea in the light of others. Intense intellectual labour, apparently dominated by one idea, does not draw upon the energy reserves of any particular set of neurones; the entire brain is involved in the process. The energy expended is liberated by internal excitements. The supply being copious, it is not totally consumed even when the demand is great.

The distinctive psychological feature common to the hysterical and hypnotic states, is concentration upon one single idea to the exclusion of others, the interest being emotional, not intellectual. An idea suggested to a hypnotized person operates independent of his conscious mind, indeed, everwhelming this for a time. So long as he remains in the hypnotic starte, the normal function of his cerebral mechanism is suspended. The process is more pronounced in hysteria, the cause of which psychological malady is obsession with a fixed idea. From this it is clear that psychologically hysteria is unconscious auto-hypnosis. Sometimes it is conscious. Symptoms of hysteria can be produced in hypnotized persons; because auto-hypnosis lies at the bottom of the abnormal emotional state which brings about the nervous and physiological disturbance called hysteria. In hypnosis, the idea is suggested from outside; the hysterical patient receives the suggestion from his subconscious mind. Charcot's investigations, carried on in greater detail by Janet, establish the existence of the unconscious process of auto-suggestion. Since hysterical symptoms can be produced by hypnotic suggestions, it is evident that the disease must be due to similar suggestion present in the patient's mind, without his being conscious of them.

That is the internal connection between hysteria and hypnosis. The discovery of this connection between the physical and psychological aspects of a complex pathological condition throws a flood of light on the mechanism of religious experience. It reveals the physiology of the exalted emotional state in which the mystic claims to come in sensible contact with realities beyond the reach of intelligence.

Religious experience is a case of hypnotism, the suggestion for producing the abnormal emotional state coming either from outside or arising from the subconscious mind of the subject. But, in either case, ultimately, it is self-hypnosis, that is to say, hysteria. To realize this fact, one needs only compare hysterical symptoms, produced under hypnosis, with the tokens of mystic experience.

Let us take the famous case of Ramakrishna Paramhamsa, which was so undoubtedly spontaneous as to impress many intelligent observers and convinced not a few sceptics. At the touch of any metal, his hand used to be paralysed. The cause of that remarkable phenomenon, according to himself, was his aversion to money which he regarded as the emblem of worldliness. The phenomenon *is physically explicable*. It is a reflex action, analogous to the shutting of the eyelid at the approach of an insect, with the only difference that it takes place on a high emotional level. And that only proves the physical nature of emotion. Like all complicated reflex actions, the paralysis of the hand was preceded by a cerebral process—a mental activity. Money is bad; its possession involves one in worldiness, which is harmful for spiritual life; so it must be avoided. This is a whole process of logical deduction. But it takes place in the subconscious mind, completely overwhelmed by an emotional superstructure—aversion to money. That is hypnosis, the suggestion coming from the subject's subconscious mind where the rationalist foundation of his aversion remains hidden. The aversion to money alone would not have the hypnotic effect if it resulted consciously from an intelligent conviction. An intelligent desire to avoid contact with money would not produce a physical reflex at the touch of metal wares; because intelligence would distinguish metal from money. To regard a coin as a mere piece of metal and consider this latter as identical with any other piece of matter, would be abstract thought, though from the practical point of view it would be false. When the Paramhamsa threw some coins in the river, he was engaged in rational thinking. To shrink from the contact of such things as ornaments, whose value is calculated in terms of money, would also be a behaviour determined by intelligent thought. But it is utterly irrational to believe that the mere touch of any metal is corrupting, because coins are made of metal. Indeed, intelligent thought can never lead to that conclusion. The original idea about the evilness of money is totally lost—in irrational emotion. The behaviour, believed to be the conscious expression of a rational idea, is purely physical—a reflex action. And when it takes on an abnormal form, such as paralysis, it is a symptom of hysteria, brought about by emotional excess. It is quite natural to remove our hand automatically whenever it comes in contact with a heated object; but if the reflex action becomes more violent, for example, if someone runs away at the sight of fire, or suffers from any physical deformity simply from the proximity of a heated object, he is regarded as behaving neither rationally, nor naturally in the physical sense. In plain language, that is a case of hysteria, and is usually given medical treatment. Similarly, the paralysis of hand at the touch of any metal vessel is a case of hysteria. It is a physical phenomenon, and should have a physical cause. To maintain that it is produced by any spiritual force, is to debase the idea of spiritual force. The essence of the idea is *qualitative* distinctiveness from the material being. This distinction precludes the possibility of any causal relation between spirit and matter, soul and body. The paralysis of the hand, even of a holy man, must have physiological reason. As it is not a normal reflex action, the reason evidently is pathological. There is no direct physical cause, as, for instance, a strong electric shock; so, it is clearly a matter of psycho–pathology. The reason is a morbid psychological state in which all rational thinking is overwhelmed by emotional exuberance; an hysterical symptom is produced by unconscious auto-suggestion.

Emotion is a *biological* (as distinct from psychological) function. Therefore, it affects bodily behaviour. Normal physiological processes may be disturbed by emotional exuberance. Abnormal physical behaviours take place in the absence of the intelligent control of neural activity exercised by the brain. In the absence of that control, liberated nervous energy is not evenly distributed; the excessive supply overflows the normal reaction tracks; and brings about reflex actions without apparent cause, such as acceleration or retardation of the heart, dilatation or contraction of the peripheric blood-vessels, disturbance of gastric or other internal secretion, perspiration, profuse flow of tears, muscular contraction (in epileptic fits, cramps or partial paralysis), dilation of the pupils, so on and so forth.

That is the physiological explanation of unusual bodily behaviours believed to be indications of mystic experience. The emotional state in which they appear is not a state of spiritual elevation, but of psycho–pathological degeneration. Conscious mental activity is suspended; organic functions thrown out of balance.

Now, all these physical abnormalities can be produced in hysterical patients under hypnosis. If a patient's arm is placed in a certain posture and he is told that it is paralysed, he will not be able to move it. Charcot and his pupils made a whole series of such experiments. The suggestion that he has drunk wine would produce in the patient all the symptoms of intoxication. Given an unprejudiced approach, a spirit of scientific investigation, it is clear that in either case—of the mystic as well as of the hypnotic patient—the abnormalities must be caused by the identical reason. It is the psycho–pathological condition in which suggestibility increases in proportion as intelligence is paralysed either by disease or predisposition. It is a general conclusion of psychiatrical practice that suggestibility is greatly increased by checking the critical faculty in the patient. For this purpose, nothing is more effective than blind faith and preconceived ideas. Therefore, religious people are particularly suggestible, the suggestions beings inherent in their own mental make-up. The auto-suggestion required for producing the hypnotic state called mystic experience, is supplied either by conscious faith or unconscious predisposition. When one firmly believes that there is a world of mystery in himself, and his faith is sufficiently fortified by the bliss of ignorance, he is sure to 'experience' it. All he has got to do is to take his faith seriously, make it the sole interest of life.

Physiological actions can be to some extent influenced voluntarily. For example, sometimes, physical ailments can be cured or produced through suggestions. But what appears to be 'volition' in such processes is not a mental force. It is stimulus to organic reaction which quickens certain kinds of glandular secretion. Even a thoroughgoing vitalist like Driesch, having investigated these 'psychic' phenomena, comes to the following interesting conclusion:

> It is not volition, but a kind of imagination to which must be added the firm conviction that that which is being imagined will really come about. And thereupon it happens, and that which brings it about is the vital factor operating upon the body. The things which are here at length comprehended in a scientific form, are some most ancient and others most modern; the practices of Indian yogis and of Christian Science are at the bottom the same thing in a religious form.[1]

The 'vital factor' is an obsession of Driesch. Modern biology has exposed the fictitious nature of this old notion refurbished by 'scientific' mysticism. In the passage quoted, Driesch himself admits that unwittingly. The events ascribed to 'volition' are brought about by the 'vital factor'; but we are also told that, what is believed to be 'volition', is really 'imagination'. So, 'vital factor' is an imagination. Because, things equal to the same thing, are equal to one another. The finding of recent biological research is that 'vital factor' is the name for the electro–chemical process which functions as the 'organizer of life'. However, the point here is that science has exposed the physiological essence of certain 'psychic phenomena' which had previously been taken for the evidence of mystic power, whose cultivation is still believed to be the way to spiritual elevation. In other words, science has cut the ground under a venerable superstition.

Concentration upon one single interest, unless it is of intellectual nature, upsets the equilibrium of cerebral function; an hysterical state is brought about in consequence; and, hypnotized by auto-suggestions coming from his belief, one sees not only desired images, but hallucinations reflecting the conflict of emotions in the subconscious self.

In the case of sceptics, converted by mystic experience, there is unconscious predisposition which is liberated as soon as the resistance of criticism gives way before the power of pure faith. This was what happened, for example, with Vivekananda. Aggressive scepticism is an interesting psychological phenomenon. It is the manifestation of the subconscious desire to find some evidence for reinforcing the flagging faith. The bold assertion of Ramakrishna that he had seen God was rather a relief (unconsciously felt) than a matter of ridicule for the young sceptic. Scepticism is not positive disbelief. It implies readiness to believe if more convincing evidence would be available. So, the assertion awakened the predisposition to believe. That immediately weakened the critical faculty of the would-be Seer. Weakening of the faculty of criticism increased his suggestibility. The silent suggestion from the Paramhamsa that the young man could have the experience of God in himself, reinforced by the auto-suggestion coming from awakened predisposition, placed him in the hypnotic state in which he found what he had been unconsciously looking for. Only, he *did not find anything* but believed to have done so. And faith moves mountains.

An authoritative opinion, very appropriate in this connection, is again pronounced by the scientific mystic Driesch. Referring to the psychological state created by imagination, reinforced by the conviction that the imaginary is real, he writes:

> In this state, suggestion with reference to a particular content, that is, a faith in the reality of this content, is attained without any ground of rational nature. I pass to the other person a hetero-suggestion, that is, I tell him that this or that thing is a fact; and he internally transforms this external suggestion into an auto-suggestion, and is convinced that things are as I have said.[2]

But let us have some more facts showing that religious experience is a psycho–pathological (hysterical) phenomenon. Sometimes, hysterical patients under hypnosis behave as if they were dreaming. They would give informations about the cause of their disease which they could not while not under hypnosies. Afterwards, they would forget all about it. In the hypnotic state, hidden parts of mental life become revealed to the ego. Similarly, mystic experience is a peep into the obscure recesses of the ego; and those dark chambers of mental life are filled with distorted images representing natural impulses, suppressed consciously or unconsciously. It is also like dream. According to scriptural tradition, the divine light in man cannot be described even by those who have seen it. The Seer wakes up from a dream which is nothing but auto–hypnosis. The object of mystic experience cannot be described, because it is hidden in the subconscious mind. Modern psychology had dragged out the contents of those dark chambers. There is nothing spiritual in them. If honest mystics, while having their experiences, were placed under expert psycho–pathological observation, there would be much interesting revelation about the psychology of religious experience. Under hypnosis, they could be made to relate the contents of their experience without sublimating them. Of course, on waking up, they would forget what they have said under hypnosis, and would return to the religious ideas which are unconscious sublimations of suppressed desires. And there would be no dishonesty in that.

As a matter of fact, illuminating glimpses into the psychology of religious experience are afforded by the life-stories, historical or legendary, of famous saints and myastics. The ancient Greeks associated hysteria with sex; the very term implies that. Modern psychology traces its origin to the conflict of vital impulses, one being the sexual which is repressed (mystic experience often results from the suppression of sex impulse). Whatever may be the nature of the conflicting impulse, all saints and seers are well known to have suffered from the same psychological symptoms as mark the hysterical state created by the suppression of sex impulse. They were all disturbed in their *tapasya* by the appearance of temptresses, deputed from the Court of the King of Paradise. In the language of modern psychology, they were being haunted by the images of a suppressed desire; they were suffering from hysteria. That was the psychological background of their mystic experience. Suppression of sex impulse is believed to be the road to mystic experience. Knowing what it leads to, one cannot but regard mystic experience as the hallucination of hysteria. . . .

Ramakrishna Paramhamsa was altogether obsessed with the sublimation of sex into the 'mother principle'. Hence his extraordinary behaviour in the proximity of women. The mother complex served the purpose of auto–suggestion to put himself in a hypnotic state. That curious behaviour was a conditioned reflex, developed unconsciously as a check upon the sex impulse. The mere sight or touch of a woman does not awaken sex impulse in every normal male. Then, why should the holy man fly into a trance to avoid an influence that cannot corrupt even all normal mortals? That queer behaviour was not a sign of mystic elevation, but symptom of a bad case of hysteria. In his subconscious emotional life, the conflict of impulses must have been very strong. The more fierce the conflict, the more pronounced the sublimation; otherwise, there would be insanity. That, however, does not mean that the sublimation is conscious. Indeed, in the sublimated form, the sex impulse is totally unconscious. But it is there—as the cause of abnormal emotional and physical appearances. To heap one's worship and devotion on a female image—on the imaginary 'mother principle'—is a classic case of sublimating sex impulse.

The religious practice of the *shaktas*—worshippers of God in a female image—includes sexual acts. To combine worship of the female principle with the suppression of sex, involves a severe emotional conflict which naturally upsets mental equilibrium and brings about a hysterical state. All saints and seers, modern as well as ancient, are victims of a very complicated type of hysteria.

Split-up personality is another hysterical symptom. It is often produced in spiritist mediums under hypnosis. The story of Dr Jeckyll and Mr Hyde is not a pure fantasy. Hysterical patients are known to develop a second personality. All recollections of a certain portion of life is lost, and the patient believes himself to be an entirely different person. Very remarkable cases of this curious phenomenon, commonly characterized as 'occult', may be caused by the conversion of an emotion into morbid symptoms. A very typical case was the famous Vaishanava prophet, Chaitanya. It is said that he believed himself to be the incarnation of Radha. In trance, he enacted the part of that mythical mistress of Krishna. Undoubtedly, he imagined himself to be the beloved of God; and that imagination was the content of his mystic experience. It was, nevertheless, a hysterical symptom, produced by the suppression of sex impulse which found the morbid emotional expression.

But sublimated in a religious devotion, its original psycho–pathological nature is accentuated. It develops introspectively. In course of time, the balance between emotion and intelligence is upset. The whole mental life is thrown off the gear of orderly cerebral mechanism. The devotee falls a victim to chronic hysteria which, consciously cultivated, becomes the characteristic feature of his spiritual life. That is a standard state of auto-hypnosis, and consequently abounds in mystic experience. Chaitanya, for example, would dream (in trance or ecstasy) of being in the embrace of Krishna, or caressing his feet in the classical Hindu fashion; and that image of unconscious erotic desire would be interpreted as mystic communion with God. There is nothing spiritual in such experience, which is abnormal satisfaction of a natural impulse driven underground as sinful.

The Freudian school of psychoanalysts is of the opinion that all religious symbols are expressions of suppressed emotions, chiefly of the sexual nature. Freudian 'pan-sexualism', however, is rejected by other psychoanalysts; and although Freud himself cannot be so accused, many of his followers are certainly guilty of exaggeration. Nevertheless, there is general agreement about the fundamental role of sex impulse in emotional life. Hinduism provides a surfeit of such facts. Sex figures very prominently in Hindu symbolism. It also determines the devotional practices to a considerable extent. But the most significant fact is that even the metaphysical aspects of Hinduism are directly linked up with a prescribed attitude towards the physical impulse of sex.

Brahmacharya is the condition *sine qua non* for mystic experience. The burden of this virtue is suppression of the sex impulse. A natural impulse cannot be killed. It is simply driven down in the subconscious mind, where it becomes harmful. It forces its way out, and influences the conscious mental life in various disguises. The control of instinctive impulses, by itself, is not a harmful practice. As a matter of fact, their *intelligent* control distinguishes man from animal. Organization of natural impulses into a well-balanced emotional life is the essence of spiritual development. That is done by reason and intelligence. Impulses, useless for, or antagonistic to such spiritual development, may be suppressed without any harm. The intellectual worker may habituate himself to light meals in order to avoid the cerebral function temporarily slowing down by the use of excessive physical energy in the digestive process. That would be a control of the impulse to eat. But the physical requirement would still be there to be satisfied by the supply of a certain irreducible amount of energy to compensate for the recurring expenditure. Only, the demand should be met through the consumption of such food as might contain greater energy in smaller quantities. That is intelligent control of a natural impulse. Similar process of control can be applied to the satisfaction of sex impulse. One need not ruin himself psycho–physically through the practice of abstinence in order to avoid the dissipation of energy in elemental passion and lust. Indeed, sex impulse, powerful and fundamental as it is, is automatically controlled by the operation of other emotions and intellectual occupations. The sex impulse of all normal human beings, with a varied interest in life, is necessarily controlled, more or less. People with high intellectual occupations are less conscious of the impulse than the *brahmachari*, who may not be anything more than a religious loafer. You cannot be really unconscious of an impulse which you are combating consciously. Control necessary for an all-round spiritual development is an automatic process. Only idle minds are swayed by elemental passions and desires. Occupied with things not directly concerned with the ego, one ceases to be constantly conscious of the sex and other natural impulses.

However, while control (intelligent satisfaction) of basic impulses belongs to the scheme of a well-balanced mind, and minor impulses (for example, desire to go to the theatre one particular evening, or to visit a friend, etc.) can be suppressed, the suppression of, or even the attempts to suppress, a major impulse is positively harmful.

Sex is a major impulse; indeed, the most fundamental. That is easy to see. Spiritual development presupposes life; and existence of life requires reproduction. If there is any creative principle, that is to be found in the sex impulse. The idea that spiritual development is conditional upon the suppression of sex impulse is, therefore, obviously absurd. The practice is as sensible as to strike at the root of the tree to make it flower and bear fruit. The satisfaction of natural impulses cannot be antagonistic to spiritual development, if the factulty naturally belongs to man. Sex being the fundamental impulse of life, its satisfaction is necessary for the physical, intellectual, and emotional well-being of man. Its suppression is bound to be injurious psychologically as well as physically. In fact, it cannot be suppressed. It manifests itself in morbid symptoms, the form of which is determined by unconscious predispositions. An abnormal psychological state is created. Mystic experience is a feature of that state. It is the product of hysteria, cultivated artificially through the practice of *brahmacharya*. A psycho–pathological state is purposefully created so that the struggle against reality could be carried on with apparent success. Mystic experience does reveal the real nature of the self, because it is a peep into the dark chambers of the subconscious mind wherein lurk the predispositions and congenital tendencies which profoundly influence all the behaviour of life in so far as this is not guided by intelligence. But in mystic experience, realities about the nature of the self appear in distorted images. Therefore, it is rather hallucination than realization of the truth. It is gross superstition to seek in distorted pictures of one's inner self the guidance for conscious life. One should rather try to dig up the ugly realities behind the fascinating pictures. That would be real knowledge of the self. The knowledge of its defects, deformities, handicaps, would enable one to remove them through the exercise of intelligence, and thus liberating the self progressively from the bondage of unconscious predispositions, set it on the endless road of real spiritual elevation. . . .

The psychological foundation for mystic experience is predisposition which may be conscious or subconscious. An idea suggested from outside brings about an emotional state overwhelming normal cerebral function, only when it is such as awakens some predisposition. By far the greater part of the ego is subconscious. Therefore, predisposition dominate mental life whenever emotions are not controlled by reason and intelligence. This happens in mystic experience as well as hysteria.

Knowledge strengthens the highest mental faculties of rationality and intelligence. Consequently, it shakes the influence of religious prejudice. Religiosity is the badge of spiritual backwardness. Therefore, the greater the intellectual backwardness the stronger the religious predisposition. The psychology of the intellectually backward is prone to be swayed by emotions. These are more primitive biological functions, being expressions of physical impulses. Not balanced by reason and intelligence, they conflict with each other—one trying to overwhelm the other. The result is the psycho–pathological state called hysteria. The religious, therefore, are more susceptible to hypnosis. In other words, they are more hysterically predisposed. Naturally, mystic experience is more frequent among them. That is the psychological explanation of the religious temperament.

There is an internal connection between the practice of *brahmacharya* and mystic experience. Only, the connection is not spiritual, but pathological. It is the reverse of the relation—'sound mind in a sound body'. The spiritual temperament more correctly, religious atavism, of the educated youth is buttressed upon the traditional prejudice in favour of that pernicious practice. (It is more pernicious when only professed, but not practised; and that is generally the case.) This temperament is the psychological phenomenon of 'regression' on a mass scale. An unsatisfied or abnormally or partially satisfied desire causes great mental tension and compression of physical energy, seeking emotional expression. Driven underground, so to say, it flows into subterranean channels; the result is resurgence of more elementary forms of emotion.

> As the water of a dammed-up river is pressed back and flows into long abandoned channels, so the emotional tension will try to express itself in obsolete forms. Old habits, events or fantasies, which were accompanied in the past by strong emotions, will emerge once more as possible outlets for the suppressed emotion. This process is called regression, and occurs also in normal people.[3]

To react upon the environment, is the most fundamental impulse of life. From an automatic, unconscious, physical process, the reaction gradually develops into a conscious approach with the purpose of understanding. Originally, a purely physical interaction, the relation between living beings and their environments becomes eventually differentiated into physical stimuli and psychological response thereto. The psychological content of the conscious reaction to environment is the impulse *to know*. Religion is the most elementary expression of this impulse. The essence of religion is belief in the supernatural. It satisfies the primitive man's incipient rationalist impulse to know. The significance of the impulse to know is the desire to find the cause of observed phenomena. The primitive man finds the cause in imaginary supernatural or superhuman agencies. That is the foundation of religion. Imagination, reinforced by the conviction that that which is imagined really exists, assumes the complection of 'knowledge'. The conviction has a pseudo-rationalist basis: Natural phenomena must be caused; they are beyond human control; ergo, their cause must be superhuman. Thus, religion becomes a psychological 'fixation'.

This phenomenon occurs also in the process of individual spiritual development. A child's desire for gratification may be so deeply influenced by peculiar circumstances as to remain fixed in its earliest form of expression. That is the reason of some grown-up people behaving childishly in certain respects. Religiosity in educated people is spiritual childishness—a psychological fixation. Thanks to the 'original sin' of ignorance, the satisfaction of the primitive man's desire for an understanding of phenomena, which dominate his existence, is necessarily found in faith. That peculiar mode of satisfaction puts its stamp on subsequent emotional and intellectual development. It is cast in religious mould. The twilight of primitive ignorance endures, more or less, over a long period of human development. Consequently, the forms of emotional and ideological expression are fixed by that circumstance. They persist even after the foundation of religion is undermined by scientific knowledge. Gradually, intelligence and reason, fortified by the advance of scientific knowledge, overwhelm those antiquated psychological traits. But they cannot altogether be eradicated at once. That requires a long period of time, during which new forms of expression are developed under different cultural conditions. Meanwhile, the psychological forms fixed in our spiritual childhood, and cultivated over a long period of slow adolescence, sink into the subconscious mind.

Now, mental tension caused by the suppression of a major physical impulse drives emotional energy underground. There the old forms of expression provide it with channels to flow into. What is called regression, takes place. This is an abnormal psychological phenomenon—a symptom of emotional morbidity. The recollected old forms of expression cannot be fitted into the scheme of the conscious mental life. There is an emotional conflict which overwhelms reason and intelligence. Cerebral functions are necessarily slackened, even suspended, when excessive nervous energy flows into the subterranean channels of the subconscious mind. The resurgence of the ghosts of old superstitions coincides with, indeed, is preceded by, a derangement of conscious mental activity. Regression, therefore, is a hysterical symptom. It takes place in hysterical patients. Mystic experience is a classical case of regression. It is an abnormal psychological state. It is a symptom of emotional morbidity, inasmuch as it is brought about by the practice of the suppression of the major impulses of life.

However, mystic experience is a rare phenomenon even in the religious atmosphere of India. It is unknown to the masses of the Indian people with all their proverbial religious temperament. They are religious because they do not know any better; that is to say, their spiritual backwardness precludes the development of higher forms of mental and emotional activity. They are fully satisfied with their spiritual childishness. Undisturbed by any departure from the blissful heaven of ignorance, their faith, though degenerated into rank superstition, does not require rationalization. Consequently, their primitive spiritualism knows no emotional conflict, which alone produces the psycho-pathological state in which mystic experience is possible. Palpably contradictory ideas may remain side by side in the primitive mind without causing any emotional conflict.

While for the vast bulk of the Indian people religiosity is a matter of habit, an emblem of spiritual stagnation, in the case of those with modern education, it is a psychological regression. With these latter, faith has lost spontaneity, though many of them are not conscious of that spiritual progress; and those who realize it more or less vaguely, feel distressed and endeavor to stem it. Nevertheless, the result is the same—emotional tension. Produced by an unconscious psychological conflict, the tension is not consciously felt. It finds an automatic expression in aggressive religiosity; the endeavour to rationalize faith. The symptoms of regression are determined by the forms of spiritual expression fixed by the peculiar circumstances of the past.

The religiosity of the Indian people is a badge of spiritual infancy; a psychological fixation—as far as the masses are concerned, and with the educated, it is a symptom of regression which, being spiritual atavism, is an abnormal psychological state. When through voluntary suppression of physical instinct and emotional impulses, the abnormality is consciously cultivated, so as to develop symptoms of hysteria; mystic experience occurs in exceptional cases. The goal of divine madness is attained only by a few. Because nature provides guarantees against mass insanity.

With all their proverbial religiosity, the masses of the Indian people are no more given to the voluntary suppression of elementary human desires and impulses than any other people. While their spiritual life stagnates behind a dam of superstition, physically and emotionally they behave, on the whole, like normal bipeds. Thus, religiosity does not upset the equilibrium of their primitive psychology. Thanks to superstitious beliefs, cultivated through ages, they are totally devoid of the faculty of criticism. Therefore, they are naturally open to hypnotic suggestions, particularly *en masse*. But that psychological tendency cannot affect their nervous system, the soundness of which is guaranteed by the satisfaction of all fundamental biological impulses.

In the case of the educated also, *as a rule*, nature prevails; suppression is not practised. Even those who honestly try, mostly fail. So, while religiosity is generally cultivated, and considerable psycho–physical injury results from the practices attempted for the purpose, it is only in exceptional cases that the operation of biological laws is disturbed to the extent of producing full-fledged hysteria. And searching psycho-pathological examination would reveal congenital predisposition in these exceptional cases.

In any case, the seer suffers from potential hysteria, which aggravated by the suppression of normal impulses, develops manifestly morbid symptoms—auto-suggestibility, hallucination, trance, double-personality, etc. Since hysterical predisposition involves physical abnormality or emotional maladjustment, it guarantees success in the practice of suppression. Complete suppression, however, is not always necessary for developing an acutely hysterical state. The attempt is enough to expose the subconscious emotional conflicts which touch off the congenital predisposition. Mystic experience is hallucination of hysteria, sublimated by superstition.

Notes

[1] Hans Driesch, *Man and the Universe.*
[2] Hans Driesch, *Man and the Universe.*
[3] J. H. Van der Hoop, *Character and the Unconscious.*

Fragments of a Prisoner's Diary Vol. I
Selections from
CRIME AND KARMA:
Cats and Women

III Crime and Karma
IV Why Men are Hanged

Introductory editorial note

I have already mentioned in an earlier editorial note that in their published first edition the *Fragments of a Prisoner's Diary* were edited and arranged by Roy in the following order:

Volume I	:	*The Memoirs of a Cat* (1940)
Volume II	:	*The Ideal of Indian Womanhood* (1941)
Volume III	:	*Letters from Jail* (1943).

However, this arrangement was subsequently altered. The *Letters* continued to constitute Volume III; Volume II was given the new title *India's Message* in the revised and enlarged second edition (1950). After Roy's death in 1954, the first volume was restructured and edited by Ellen Roy and published by Renaissance Publishers, Calcutta, in 1957 under the new title *Crime and Karma : Cats and Women*. This revised second edition consisted of six chapters: 1. The Memoirs of a Cat 2. The Ideal of Indian Womanhood 3. Crime and Karma 4. Why Men are Hanged 5. The Cult of Asceticism and Renunciation 6. The Philosophical Revolution.

The essays gathered under this new title are to be found in their draft form in volumes IV to IX of the Prison Manuscripts. I have included here two chapters: 'Crime and Karma' (Chapter III) and 'Why Men are Hanged' (Chapter IV). Omission of any sentence or passage from the text is indicated by an ellipsis (. . .).

In choosing the piece 'Why Men are Hanged' I have in mind an aspect of Roy's radicalism which, though quite significant, is not always noted by Roy specialists or Roy's followers. From his earliest years Roy showed a profound sense of commitment to the underdog, the ostracized, the reject, or in the words of Frantz Fanon, 'the wretched of the earth'. Persons who knew him during his adolescence and youth have recorded in their written recollections and interviews how even as a schoolboy he helped the poor and nursed the sick. He served indefatigably as a volunteer during famines and pestilence, even while he was fully involved in the underground revolutionary movement. His radicalism was not just a matter of profession or ideology, but was rooted in his basic inclination and personality. Freedom and reason were, of course, his central pursuits throughout his career, but there was also in him a deep feeling of compassion for all those who, for no fault of their own, were deprived and punished by the rich and powerful, by the Shastras, by inequitous social institutions, customs, and laws. His critique of religion, society, tradition, polity, and economy was inspired by his lifelong commitment to not only freedom and truth, but also social justice.

Roy had his first experience of jail when he was twenty-three, but the threat of imprisonment pursued him through most of his active political life. When eventually he was again arrested in July 1931, and sentenced to twelve years' transportation (which, in effect, meant rigorous imprisonment), he had an opportunity to know at first hand the so-called 'criminals' who belonged to the lowest strata, or the rejects of society. In the course of preparing his own 'Defence' he had to carefully study the writings of Bentham (*Principles of Morals and Legislation*), Austin (*Jurisprudence*), Beccaria (*Crime and Punishment*), and other enlightened thinkers. The study not only deepened his distrust of the penalizing powers of the government but also his understanding of the conditions which caused crimes. He strongly felt the urgent need for elimination of such conditions, which not only victimized the poor but also brainwashed them into accepting their victimization as preordained by the laws of dharma and karma. He found during his prison years that many of those so-called 'criminals' were much better individuals than their jailors. His instinctive sympathy for the underdog was fortified by both his personal experience and his reading of the enlightened thinkers. He saw society as being primarily responsible for driving people to 'crime', and, most punishment to be a means of perpetuating social injustice and stupidity. In this essay, as in most of the other fragments from the *Prisoner's Diary*, it is not so much Marxism as a deeper and older spirit of radicalism which is particularly manifest.

There is much in the *Fragments*—in their style and content—that reminds me of Voltaire and the 'philosophes' of eighteenth century France. If they were written and published in Bengali, that would have constituted a landmark in Bengali literature. However, it is of interest to note that in the late twenties and early thirties the world of crime and punishment did attract a new generation of Bengali writers of fiction. Reacting against the romantic and rather idealistic world-view of Rabindranath Tagore, these avant-garde novelists and short story writers vigorously advocated and practised 'realism' in literature. Of the two major figures of this 'realist' movement—Jagadish Gupta and Naresh Chandra Sengupta—the latter is known to have been close to Roy's communist converts in Bengal, at least during the late twenties. At the founding conference of the Peasants' and Workers' Party in Bengal at Krishnagar in 1926, Dr Naresh Chandra Sengupta was elected President of the Party (*Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India*, Vol. II 1923–5, New Delhi, 1982, p. 672). While formally the two elected Secretaries were Qutbuddin Ahmed and Hemanta Kumer Sarkar, the de facto Secretary was Muzaffar Ahmed, Roy's early convert in Bengal to the ideology of communism (M. Ahmed, *Myself and the Communist Party of India*, Calcutta, 1970, pp. 428–9). Sengupta, who taught law at the Calcutta University, was a radical in his outlook; he was the principal spokesman of the 'realists' in their public controversy with Tagore; he also wrote several knowledgeable and sympathetic novels dealing with the world of crime. It seems to me very probable that Roy's writings and ideas had a seminal influence on the 'realist' school of Bengali writers during the twenties and early thirties. I have considered this possibility in my paper 'Radicalism and the Bengali Intelligentsia' (IRI Essays & Monographs No. 9, Sibnarayan Ray, *The Intelligentsia*, Calcutta, 1986).

SNR.

III Crime and Karma

In prison, one naturally feels the absence of freedom more acutely, and for the philosophically inclined, the problem of freedom presents many interesting aspects. For example, there are prisoners—quite a lot of them—who like to be in jail. They corroborate the story that an old man committed suicide when he was released from a long-term of imprisonment. There is nothing perverse in their mentality. After a long term of imprisonment, one comes out completely a misfit to the surroundings outside. For having been in jail, he is regarded as an outcast. The struggle for life becomes for him much more difficult than previously. That being the case, it is quite natural for long-term prisoners, having nothing very particularly attractive for their life outside, to get reconciled to the idea of living their entire life in jail, where at least the bare necessities of physical existence are available to all and sundry. There are other prisoners who do not mind being in jail, although they may prefer to be outside. There is still another sort who do not seem to feel the loss of freedom very acutely. In them, the spiritual callousness produced by the vicissitudes of life attains almost philosophical detachment.

Freedom, of course, is a relative concept, always and everywhere. It is limited by the circumstances of life. One is free in so far as he can control those circumstances. Man's superiority over other animals consists of the ability to exercise this control to an ever-increasing extent. But the biological advantage is not realized to any appreciable degree, except in favourable social conditions. Indeed, under adverse social circumstances, man possesses much less freedom than lower animals, notwithstanding his biological superiority. This tragic fact of human existence is explained in India by the doctrine of karma. This is a doctrine of social slavery.

For five years and more, I lived among about two thousand prisoners. They represented practically all the strata of Indian society, except the topmost ones. The great majority of them were in jail for crimes committed under the pressure of adverse circumstances, in which the bulk of Indian people live. Those circumstances were not created by them. They did not choose to live in circumstances that breed crimes. Yet, there were few among those victims of adverse social conditions who did not believe that it was their fate to be in jail. The more sophisticated ones ascribed their sorrow and suffering to karma or the will of God. Fatalism represents the popular conception of the law of karma.

According to this doctrine, everyone must enjoy the fruits of good action and be punished for the evil. The causal consequence may not be evident in the same life. The doctrine of reincarnation is the counterpart of the doctrine of karma. Yet, the highest ideal of Indian spiritualism is *nishkam* karma—to work unconcerned with the result. How can one be unconcerned with that which must happen to him irrespective of his will? Here is a contradiction between free will and determinism. If the law of karma is to be interpreted not as an expression of popular superstition, then it implies the acceptance of the principle of determinism. Providential will is excluded from this scheme. The future of anyone is determined by his present actions, and these again have been determined by his acts in the past. Another ideal of Indian spiritualism is to regard this chain of the law of karma as a vicious circle, and to endeavour to find a way out to salvation. This ideal is set forth most authoritatively in the *Gita*:

> I do not do any work [do not act] for the result. I am neither friend to some nor foe to others. I have given enough [what is necessary or what is deserved] to everyone in my creation. Therefore, whoever knows me in this form [character] and, working not for the result, tries to be like myself, he becomes free from all bondage.

If this scriptural injunction is read together with the doctrine of karma, either the latter is invalidated, or an unattainable ideal is placed before the aspirant for spiritual salvation. If the law of karma is immutable, then, one may do good deeds without wishing the result, yet he shall necessarily enjoy the fruits of those deeds. He may go to the Heaven, and there is no freedom even in Heaven. Regarded as a determinist law, the doctrine of karma renders the ideal of freedom unattainable. Consequently, it militates against the higher ideal of *nishkam* karma. But there is some sense in this apparent madness. The two seemingly contradictory ideals supplement each other for forging the chain of social slavery for the masses. The doctrine of karma teaches everyone to be reconciled to his fate. But, on the other hand, it may make him to be more discriminating about his acts in the present and in the future. The failure to be rewarded for meritorious acts naturally discourages conformity with the established standards of virtuosity and good behaviour. Therefore, a higher ideal is set up, so that one may not hanker after the reward, and behave in the prescribed manner permissible for the maintenance of the established social order.

However, there is no use trying to make the prisoners see that they are not in jail entirely for their fault, that the 'crimes' for which they are punished, in most cases, are committed under the pressure of circumstances not created by themselves and beyond their control. The social background of the crimes committed by the great majority of prisoners can be easily indicated. It is so very palpable. Theft and robbery, for example, are as a rule committed under the pressure of poverty. Even the so-called 'professionals' ultimately are victims of social iniquity. . . .

In the years covered by the observation recorded here, the number of prisoners convicted for dacoity as well as theft kept on increasing. Those were the years (1931–6) of aggravated impoverishment of the peasantry, and pauperization of considerable section of the rural population owing to the catastrophic fall of agricultural prices in consequence of the world economic crisis. The income of the peasantry, already hardly enough for bare subsistence, declined by half. On the other hand, prices of manufactured articles were artificially kept up by protective tariffs, and high customs duties levied for budgetary purposes. The consequent great disparity between the prices of what they bought and what they sold further contracted the peasants' already limited capacity to buy. Pauperization of the bulk of the peasantry contributed to the destitution of the other productive classes of the rural population, namely, the artisans. It also ruined the petty village trader.

That was a fertile field for 'crimes' of violent nature. Police reports showed alarming increase of the cases of highway robbery, dacoity, and violence against the moneylenders and landlords. Popular poverty plus high taxation always give birth to banditry which is the symptom of a deep-seated social crisis. Given a highly organized State apparatus, 'law and order' can be maintained by coercion and repression. But the process of social dissolution cannot be arrested. Prisons present a true picture of the situation in the country.

How does such a precarious system still stand? The answer is found in the mentality—philosophy of life, if you please—of the victims of the system. The undermined system is guaranteed not so much by political coercion as by spiritual oppression. The fundamental guarantee is provided by cultural traditions which constitute a secure foundation of the political order of repressive laws. The law of karma reinforces the laws of the Imperialist State. The belief in providential preordination serves as the safety-valve for the maintenance of the decayed politico–economic order of colonial exploitation, superimposed upon feudal–patriarchal social relations.

This is not the first time in the history of India that fatalism or religious prejudice on the part of the masses is assuring continued existence of a bankrupt socio–political system. In the 'Golden Age' of ancient India, the masses also starved, and suffered from all sorts of misery. There is plenty of evidence to this effect to be found in the Mahabharata for instance.

Barahamihir, for example, describes a conversation between two men in a sad plight. One, voicing the spirit of revolt, naturally engendered by intolerable oppression, says: 'We are suffering for the ill-doings of our King.' Thereupon, the other, representing the true spirit of Indian culture, replies: 'That is not true; our suffering is the fruit of our own actions in the past life.' The doctrine of karma, the belief in the transmigration of soul, here stands revealed in its real significance. These doctrines of 'spiritualist' philosophy were expounded by the *rishis* of old with the object of making the masses feel themselves responsible for their misery, and thus be reconciled to it. The attitude of the second man exonerates the oppressors from all responsibility, and the established social order is guaranteed against the danger of a threatening popular revolt.

This attitude still dominates the mentality of the Indian masses. Those inclined to assume an ostentatious air of religiosity devoutly demonstrate resignation to the will of God. The former are sincere in their superstition; they live blissfully in unadulterated ignorance. The latter, on the contrary, are usually consummate hypocrites. My experience with prisoners has been that the more ostentatiously religious a man, the greater a rogue he is. And in view of the fact that a Central Prison is a fairly representative replica of the entire country, I maintain that my experience provides a reliable ground for generalization.

I picked up a stray kitten and brought it up. The way in which she was differently treated by different prisoners was a matter of interesting observation. The poor animal was invariably well treated by the 'hardened criminals'. Having never had the experience of kindness, these were kind. Usually, I found the 'habitual criminal' to be a simple soul with spontaneous nobility hidden under a superficial callousness. I regarded the attitude towards the cat as a tangible measure of the real nature of the man. Those always invoking the *Paramatma*, or given to some other form of religious demonstration, were invariably cruel and mean.

Theft is a greater crime than murder. That is human ethics. Murder—of the kind for which people are punished by law—is a petty matter, being violence only against individuals. Theft is a different thing. It is attack upon the very foundation of society, namely, private property. But I am a believer in the morality of theft. It represents a challenge to the immoral social order which makes 'criminals' of innocent men, and then punishes them for no fault of theirs.

Habitual juvenile thieves were my particular friends. They are highly interesting subjects of psychological study. As human material, they are equally fascinating. Their philosophy of life is simply marvellous. They really enjoy life, and regard it as a great joke, though in reality it is anything but that. What to a superficial observer or a supercilious moralist appears to be criminal callousness, is really a sublime philosophical indifference to the conventional values of life. The expert pickpocket, for example, is not so much concerned with what he picks. He is proud of his skill. He relishes the joy of plying his trade skilfully. And he looks upon his victims as so many fools. He does not steal, but pulls the leg of the society which has thrown him to the scrapheap, and to the tender mercies of the police.

These jolly members of the brotherhood of gamins are the only honourable exceptions to the general rule of fatalist resignation, either sincere or pretended. They do not submit to, but defy, fate. They have no fear for prison. Why should they? Only in prison they are given those most minimum necessities for bare physical existence that are denied them anywhere else. Outside the jail, they are 'free' to go hungry, to get wet in the rains, to shiver in the winter, and to be eventually picked up by the police. Asked why he comes back to jail always after his release, one of my particular friends gave the disarming and thoroughly convincing answer: 'Freedom does not fill my stomach, and the police do not let me alone.' And he added with a charming candour that he was glad that they did not. Two full meals a day, a dry place to sleep, blankets in the cold season—these are preferable to 'freedom' to starve, for a change. And, fortunately, for those who need it so badly, the change is not left to the chance. The police are there to look after it that they get it regularly. The life of these boys being so very well determined by the very nature of their existence as the ugly symptom of a rotten social system, they know neither God, nor karma, nor even fate. More correctly, fate is such a stark reality for them, that they have no occasion to speculate about it.

IV Why Men are Hanged

The following few cases, selected at random from among the inmates of five prisons, clearly reveal the social background on which 'crimes' are committed in India. Everywhere crime is a social phenomenon. Crimes are committed not against society by individuals who are punished as criminals. They are crimes of the society. The victims of social injustice are punished by the rules of society. Since crime is the ugly bastard of social injustice, its forms are largely determined by the specific social structure of the country. The cases I have selected are typically Indian. They could be committed only in the peculiar social atmosphere of this country. Placed under different social environments, these men and women would not be hanged or otherwise punished. The motive of crimes committed by them springs from the established relations and traditional taboos of Indian society. It is to be traced not to human nature, but to Indian nature, which is the product of the Indian mode of living, and is dominated by the Indian mode of thought.

It was a bright lad, hardly above twenty, born of a high-caste family of small landowners. His parents had done the unprecedented thing of sending him to study in a college. In quest of the benefit of higher education, he had to go away from his native village in the hill regions of Kumaun to some large town. A couple of years in circumstances so very different from those of his native place had unsettled the emotional life of the impressionable youth. He had returned home, not so much with new ideas as with awakened impulses and desires which, in the atmosphere of his native village, could not but lead to disaster. I saw him under the sentence of death, awaiting execution resignedly, if not quite cheerfully. For, as he declared himself with tragic frankness, was he not going to atone for his sin? It was operation of the inscrutable will of God—of the inexorable law of karma. That was his own explanation.

What was the crime for which he was hanged? He had fallen in love; and, having lived his adolescence in the unsettling atmosphere of new-fangled ideas, was partially free from the inhibition against the physical basis of the emotion. Of course, sex impulse was still a matter of shame to him, as with the vast majority of Indian youths, notwithstanding their modernism in other respects. And, unfortunately, thanks to the social atmosphere of the village, it drove him towards something still more shameful. He committed, or nearly did, incest.

The difference is of little significance, and need not be factually established. The point is that he was driven that way, because, under the given conditions, there was no other channel open for his emotions to flow and his natural impulse to be satisfied. Instead of stopping to think how such unnatural, immoral, and sinful development could take place, the village, of course, was not only scandalized, but enraged. Fierce conflict of two powerful emotions, love and shame, must have driven the boy to a state of hysteria verging on madness. The stark impossibility of ever being able to escape merciless social persecution evidently made him desperate. Utterly helpless and hopeless, he revolted, and killed his beloved—to spare her a whole life of shame and resulting destitution. He did not kill himself because he wished to atone for his sin. Having sent his beloved where no cruelties of this world could reach her, he delivered himself up to the police, and eventually walked to the gallows, not repentent, but resigned—the hero of a heartbreaking tragedy.

He had fallen in love with his own sister, recently widowed in the bloom of youth. Oh, what a horrible, disgusting affair! The moral sense of people with any decency cannot but be outraged by such lewdness. But thank God, such loathsome, unnatural incidents are very rare. Indian culture and social codes exclude the possibility of the occurrence of such revolting moral depravity and sexual looseness. But don't be carried away by moral indignation. Ponder over the facts of the case, and the deplorable situation in which such tragedies happen may appear to you in an altogether new light.

The youth was sent to the town for education. Evidently, he was expected to learn something that could not be learned in the village. It was not his fault that he had lived up to the expectation. One cannot breathe in the atmosphere of modern education, however defective, half and half, so to say: Take in so much as necessary to be a clerk or a minor official or a lawyer or a medical practitioner, and shun the rest as a source of corruption. In any case, a town is entirely different from a small village. For good or evil (I believe it is for the good), the mentality of the body of Indian students in higher educational institutions is in a flux. The belief in traditional values, moral as well as social, is greatly shaken, though far from being overcome as yet. New ideas and strange ideals are agitating the youth—of both the sexes. No impressionable adolescent could live in such an atmosphere without being carried away by the spirit of the time, if not as yet positively of revolt. The inevitable disturbance of ideas and emotions is bound to be all the greater in cases of those who come to this atmosphere of partial freedom and incipient revolt suddenly, having lived until then in the placid backwaters of the remote village. The hero of our tragedy was one of such cases. In the town, he saw things not to be seen in his native place. He heard voices that had not reached him before. He allowed himself to be influenced by the strange sights he saw and disturbing voices he heard. Why should he not? Had he not been sent to the city to learn precisely what could not be learned in his village? Thus, after two years, he returned home, not indeed fully possessed of modern education, but with some new notions about life.

Naturally, the young man would find the life in the village rather dull. There was no excitement, no romance, no movement, not even expectation. All channels for venting his newly-awakened emotions closed, he took to brooding. The condition of his sister, a commonplace of callous disregard, provided him with food for thought. A part of his education in the town had been to be conscious of the sex impulse. That being a lesson taught by nature, he would have learned it anywhere. Two years in the atmosphere of semi-modernism had only encouraged him to be honest, at least to himself, if not to others. Most probably, he still regarded his willing response to the irresistible call of nature as a shameful thing to do. Yet, presumably, his modern education had gone to the extent of making him admit to himself, perhaps with great reluctance, that he could not deny feeling the impulse. That much education would make him realize the difficulty of the tragic life to which his sister had just been condemned for no fault of hers.

So damnably callous is our social cruelty that fathers well past middle-age keep on diligently at the marital duty totally oblivious that widowed daughters or daughters-in-law, still in the bloom of youth, are made also of flesh and blood, and consequently might find it extremely difficult to live up to the ideal of virtuous renunciation forcibly set to them. The traditional taboo on the frank admission of sex impulse makes the unthinking herd unconscious of the cruelty they callously commit. Partially awakened from the moral coma, the young man saw that his sister was also young and as such could not help feeling the exigencies of youth, although she was compelled to pretend that she did not.

In such a tragic situation, it would be but natural for a brother, no longer quite an unquestioning conformist with all the stupidities of village life, to come to the aid of the distressed sister. In the town, he had seen young women going about more freely than in the village. He had seen them taking interest in things, forbidden, or unknown to, or beyond the reach of, the rural womenfolk. He had seen that life, less restricted by old social customs and prejudices, made women more cheerful. He thought that some occupation more congenial and distractive than domestic drudgery might lift a little the dreadful gloom hanging over his sister's life. He began teaching her to read and write; and, while imparting the merest rudiments of it, talked more about the benefit of modern education. The family, of course, did not look upon the procedure very kindly. According to tradition, the girl, in her state, should not take interest in anything of this world; she should devote herself to the sacred memory of the dead husband and to the service of the living relatives. However, not much attention was paid to the matter in the beginning. Let the unfortunate creature be consoled a bit. The whole life was still ahead of her—to work out her karma. Besides, thanks to his 'high' education, and particularly his sojourn in the town, the young man had acquired a certain amount of authority even in the eyes of the elders.

Before long, the next step was taken. The girl was persuaded to accompany her brother out of the house; the two were often seen walking rather happily in the neighbouring fields and woods. What an unpardonable thing on the part of a widow! To be happy! When she had just been condemned by Providence to a life of mourning, sorrow, privation, and service! But the fat was in the fire. The young man had told the girl everything he had seen, heard, and learned in the town. She avidly drank of the fascinating picture so very very different from the drab life she had lived, and the dreary and dreadful life that still had to be lived. She dreamed of freedom—of a life with some meaning. And to the youth, life is identical with love.

They planned to go to some city together—to see more, to learn more, and—to live freely as they could never do in the village. They themselves did not know what they exactly meant or wanted. Perhaps they did not mean anything which would make them more than brother and sister. Perhaps they did. In any case, it would be quite natural for them to be sexually attracted, that is to say, fall in love. The young man had returned home with awakened sex impulse, and no longer quite ashamed of admitting the desire to himself. As a matter of fact, very few normal beings are. The pretension is hypocritical. Back to the village, he might have relapsed into the habit of inhibition or taken to something much worse—self-abuse, sodomy, or clandestine sex-intercourse under sordid conditions. Negative morality, imposed by our social conditions, frequently encourages these practices which are worse than immoral, because they are physically harmful, aesthetically revolting, and corrupt the emotional life of the youth, making them vulgar, often vicious, and generally hypocritical. Fortunately as well as unfortunately, there was his sister who, thanks to her own misfortune, provided him with a channel for his youthful emotion to flow normally. It seems that she responded. The call of nature was irresistible.

One hears so much about human nature that never changes. The fact, however, is that the desire to love and be loved is the only constant of human nature. And the foundation of this essence of what is called human nature is biological. You can disassociate love from sex just as much as you quench thirst without drink, or satisfy hunger without food. Love, of course, is not limited to sex relations. But primarily, it is nothing more sublime or mysterious than emotional reflex of the urge of an organism to reproduce itself. Emotions, however noble or sublimated, are physical urges in the last analysis. Therefore, normally, when psychological inhibitions and social taboos are absent or swept away by extraordinary combinations of circumstances, love breaks the bonds of sublimated hypocrisy, and not always successful self-deception.

Youth cannot help attracting and being attracted by youth. Segregation succeeds at the cost of sincerity; sexual chastity, bought at such a high price, is spurious. As a matter of fact, segregation breeds exactly those vices it is meant to check. It encourages promiscuity, which often amounts to incest. Forced widowhood plus segregation puts a premium on incest. This is not an inferential assertion. It is a matter of fact. Have the courage to look ugly reality in the face, lift the veil of cant that carefully covers the skeleton in the cupboard, stop whitewashing lies, dig for the truth, and you will be shocked to find ample verification of this statement. I have actually heard people, not altogether illiterate and uncultured, justify the practice committed, of course clandestinely, in their own household with the argument that the scandal had better be kept at home. Incest, after all, is not so unnatural as it is generally held to be. The priesthood of Gaya, for example, is a strictly inbreeding community. As a matter of fact, incest is a natural inclination. No less an authority than the great anthropologist, Sir James G. Frazer, is of the opinion that precisely because of the strong general inclination towards incest, it is so severely punished by communities with greater possibility of such intercourse. Love being a law of nature, brothers, and sisters cannot help being lovers when, in the critical period of adolescence, they are thrown upon themselves either by the clannishness of primitive people, or by the spiritual taboos of civilized society. That is exactly what happened to set the stage for the tragedy here recorded.

The young man went to the gallows because he had done the only honourable thing that he could possibly do under the circumstances, utterly beyond his control, if the girl he loved, either as sister or sweetheart, was not to be driven out into a callous world, which would accommodate the derelict only as a forced vendor of herself. How painful facts of immorality result from the sanctimonious fictions of moral indignation! The unfortunate girl could not live in the village. She was sure to be thrown out by her parents, who would not dare protect her, even if they cared to. She would not be given another chance even to make good her widowhood. A widow, caught in the act of violating her obligatory virtue, or even suspected publicly of doing so, can expect no mercy from the draconian codes of our society. The façade of purity must not be soiled. What is punished, is not immorality, but revolt against, or disregard for, the established conventions. Even the lack of sufficient fear for this is an unpardonable offence. The poor girl could not possibly remain in the village. Where could she go? How could she live? These questions did not bother her persecutors—those passionate admirers of the sublime ideal of widowhood, those stern defenders of a social system that breeds hypocrisy in the name of morality. But the moral society would not guarantee her the barest subsistence, unless she was ready to pay for that privilege. If she sold herself, she could even have a life of luxury as long as she would have her youth to sell. In orthodox Hindu society, the woman can live only by selling herself either in wedlock or in the open market. Is it moral to drive a girl to prostitution, the only alternative to suicide open to her under the given conditions, simply because she failed to obey social laws that violate the law of nature?

The young man passionately believed that it was not. The murder of the girl was a desperate protest against the tyranny of a callous society. That was the crime for which he was hanged.

The next case can be regarded as the sequel—not directly, but taxonomically. This is the case of a young widow, sentenced, not indeed to death, but to a long term of imprisonment, for having strangled her child at birth. The shocking act was so obviously involuntary, done in utter despair, that the judge, while sentencing the accused according to the letter of the law, recommended her for mercy. I do not know if the mercy was granted.

She came from an ordinary peasant family. After the death of her husband, she had been living with his people as is customary in such cases. Only in well-to-do families, young widows can have the poor consolation of returning to their parents instead of being forced to live with strange people with whom they have no longer any connection, and who usually treat them as beasts of burden, not even kindly, they being regarded as embodiments of misfortune. For some tortuous reasons, young widows are held responsible for the untimely death of their husbands, and consequently, also for the material loss suffered by the families concerned. Death of able-bodied male youths amounts to considerable material loss for joint families living mostly on the proceeds of the labour of their own members. Widows are held responsible for the calamity, because it was their fate to be widowed. The blame is laid at the door of the widow, and she must pay the penalty. Indeed, sometimes young widows are treated as if they had actually killed their husbands. They are often called witches who have devoured their unlucky husbands.

Among the working peasants, women cannot be segregated. Purdah, where it is observed, is rather a matter of formality. There, sex morality is not meticulously dressed up, as among the upper classes, in rigid social conventions and high-sounding phrases. It stands out naked as jealousy and possessiveness. The wife belongs to the husband; social morality demands that his proprietorship should be respected by others who are entitled to reciprocal consideration for their rights. Jealousy is outraged sense of ownership. It is righteous indignation against trespass. The chastity of women in general, that is, their sexual subordination to particular men they are respectively allotted to, is protected as the collective possession of the male. Such a rustic sense of sex morality, in the necessary absence of segregation, except as a mere formality, is bound to make room for what is called illicit intercourse. Conventions are there; but not cant, which is immensely more powerful, since it influences the victims of sex subjugation psychologically, thus transforming the coerced into voluntary, convinced, even enthusiastic conformists. Moral cant is absent among the lower classes, because they lack the cultural attainment which is the condition for that virtue.

Such was the social and moral atmosphere in which this particular woman lived. As long as she gave her keepers sufficient satisfaction as a beast of burden, they were not any too watchful about what she might do as a woman. Incest being a taboo by common consent—unless performed *sub rosa*, as is done not infrequently, only without love—young widows are possessed rather as beasts of burden than as women. Indeed, with the backward peasant masses, women generally are beasts of burden in the first place, performing the sexual function only incidentally. So, the woman of this story, like others in her position, must have had a certain amount of freedom regarding the satisfaction of sex impulse.

Those of her kind are not handicapped by psychological inhibitions cultivated among the upper classes. Nor are restrictions on movement so very strictly observed that they could not be broken through on the sly. Young widows perform labour for the merest keep. Consideration for the value of their labour does not permit their keepers to be too exacting about their conduct when they are not gainfully employed. One does not turn out such a valuable asset simply because she happens to meet a man in the barn. This particular woman was given that latitude, willy-nilly, if not quite consciously.

In course of time, she became pregnant. Even that fact, when it came to be known to her keepers, did not provoke moral indignation sufficiently strong to turn her out. For the good horse-sense of the peasant, unencumbered by moral cant, it would be silly to lose the labour power of a strong young woman on such an account as could be easily settled. She was ordered to keep under cover until the child was born, then get rid of it promptly by strangulation, and dispense with the remains neatly according to instruction. The alternative to obeying the order was expulsion from the only refuge in the hostile world, public disgrace, and a future too dreadful to visualize. If the helpless woman was actually asked to choose between the alternatives is not known. However, she had to choose. There was no other way of escape. The man she met in the barn, of course, would take no responsibility. Nor had she any claim on him. She chose to kill her child, failed to cover up the deed, was charged of a heinous offence, found guilty, and condemned. The whole tragic process was formally proper and legally justifiable, if not quite just. But perverse indeed is the sense of justice and morality which fails to sympathise with the unfortunate creature as a helpless victim of an immoral, unjust, cruel, stupid society. It was so obviously a case of crime committed under compulsion by an utterly helpless and hopeless victim of social conditions, that even the legalistic bias of the judge was overwhelmed by pity.

In her statement during the trial, the woman declared that she had killed the child, not for the sake of herself, but to spare the child the pain of dying of starvation eventually. Had she not acted as she did reluctantly, she would be thrown out in a hostile world, with absolutely no means of subsistence except charity from the merciful, which could not be expected by a branded sinner. Despair overwhelmed maternal instinct. Or, was not the crime really suicide of maternal instinct at bay? At any rate, the punished 'criminal' was certainly not responsible for the crime. The responsibility cannot be laid at the door of any single individual or of a few individuals. It was collective responsibility, as the responsibility for practically all crimes is. . . .

There was an old man, well above sixty, sentenced to death for killing his young wife. On appeal, the sentence was reduced to transportation for life. His advanced age was taken into consideration. I wonder how he liked the change. Since the shortest term that a lifer must serve is ten years, there was little chance of the man serving out his sentence. It is better to die at once than undergo the process over a period of a number of years. Yet, I have not met one single prisoner who would not prefer a life sentence to the capital. Curious!

However, let me record the story of the old man who killed his wife. When he married (I do not remember whether it was for the third or the fourth time), he was not yet sixty. So, his action was not altogether unjustifiable. But he made the mistake of overlooking the fact that the justification would disappear by the time his bride would be a woman. She was hardly ten at the time of their marriage. When she was twenty, the man was well over sixty. He naturally liked having a young wife—to cook his food and otherwise look after him. But a healthy young woman of twenty wants something more out of marital relations. The cause of the eventually committed crime and its punishment originated in that divergence of the natural needs of two people united inseparably.

The old man could not be held responsible for marrying a girl of ten. He was a simple villager; where could he get a grown-up bride in the village? Presumably, he would have preferred a mature woman for the consideration of domestic management, if not for a more intimate reason. However, he had to take what was available, like everybody, and wait. Only, meanwhile, he grew old, less capable of performing his marital duty to the satisfaction of the other party concerned, than of demanding his due which was rather of servile than marital nature.

The result was that the young wife began to carry on with some village beau. Conventionally, she deviated from the path of virtue— sexual faithfulness to the husband. If the husband was, for some reason or other, in this particular case, for advanced age, not capable of retaining the faithfulness on the part of the wife, the latter should remain faithful to the ideal of wifely chastity. Our social lawgivers wanted to improve upon nature and rectify a mistake of the Maker. Sex-impulse is natural, and demands satisfaction. If it is a sinful desire, why did not God exclude it from the scheme of his creation? It is sheer sophistry to argue that he created human beings with the sinful desire in order to give them a chance to be virtuous. If God is good, everything he created must also be good. The moralists are the most immoral and the religious are the most irreligious people in the world. To try to improve on the scheme of God's creation is to insult God. Instead of abandoning their perverse, irreligious notions of morality and stupid social taboos, the orthodox persecute those who obey the will of God and act according to the providentially ordained laws of nature. The young wife of the old man could not obey the man-made law and natural law at the same time. She obeyed God instead of man. Hence she was sinful in the eyes of society which places human wisdom above divine dispensation, while pretending to be guided by this.

The young woman seems to have been particularly spirited, possessed of admirable courage and frankness, the appreciation and practice of which would improve the moral tone of our social life. The old man told her that he did not intend to kill her. He wanted to persuade her to give up her evil ways. But he was uncontrollably enraged by her insolent retort to his rebuke. The scandalizing answer was that, being herself young, she wanted a young man; and as she could not leave her old husband and marry again, she was compelled to go the way she was going. She further said that she was doing her duty to the husband— taking care of his household, looking after his physical welfare, etc.; that it was he who was failing in his marital duty, and therefore it was absurd for him to accuse her of infidelity. He should not be a dog in the manger; he should not object to her seeking elsewhere, in the only way possible under the given social conditions, what he could not give her.

That was an unheard of insult. It made the old man see red; and he killed her. Even after conviction, with at least ten years of rigorous imprisonment staring him grimly in the face, the old man was boiling with moral indignation. But one could easily see that it was not so much his moral sense as the sense of property that was outraged. The woman belonged to him. She had no business to give herself to a loafer and have the cheek to justify her action in such a brazen manner. She should have at least pretended faithfulness, as the token of formal admission of the husband's right of ownership, and then carry on with the young man clandestinely, if she were so incorrigibly perverse as to desire something more than keeping house and sharing a barren bed with an old man.

The moralists do not see that, to place a woman in such a position and keep her there under the threat of social persecution, amounts to denying her the right of motherhood—a right given by nature to every woman. Can anything be more immoral and sinful than depriving a woman of the delight of motherhood? No moralist would brand motherhood and the desire to have children as sinful. Then, how could they reasonably maintain their stupid attitude towards sex relations? There is no other way to motherhood. Only prophets and avatars are immaculately conceived. If motherhood is divine, the way to it cannot be sinful. When a natural impulse is placed under stupid taboos, it is bound to seek satisfaction in tortuous channels. The notion of morality that runs counter to the laws of nature is immoral. It leads to corruption and crime.

There was the case of an entire family punished on the charge of murdering one man. Altogether six, including two women. The father with one of his three sons was hanged. The remaining two brothers, the mother, and a daughter-in-law all given transportation for life.

The murdered man was the village moneylender. The family punished for murdering him lived on a few *bigha*s of land, and was heavily indebted as all poor Indian peasant families are. The meagre means of subsistence of a number of hard-working people was at the legal disposal of the moneylender who held a mortgage on it.

The charge was that one day the moneylender was invited to the house of the debtors who proposed to do business over a friendly meal. It was alleged that the plan was to poison him; but somehow he survived the murderous plan which, granted that the allegation was true, by its very nature, must have the criminal cooperation of the womenfolk of the household The would-be murderers, however, were determined to dispatch the benevolent *bania* out of the arduous life of collecting compound interest from a lot of people destitute of the means for meeting their legal obligations in full and promptly on demand. It was argued from the side of the prosecution that the shrewd *bania* had smelled rats, and left the friendly feast rather precipitately; the father of the family with one son accompanied him, and hacked the good samaritan in a wood on the way. The argument was that the behaviour of the guest had frightened the criminal conspirators who realized that, to head off sure exposure of their murderous plan, they must finish the job somehow; and they did with a *dao* what could not be done neatly with poison.

The defence was that the distressed debtors had hoped to mollify the moneylender with hospitality, and then persuade him not to drive them off the land as he had threatened to do if they failed to pay off in full. But with all the Indian's spiritual view of life , the *bania* had behaved like the materialist American, and insisted upon doing business first. He was alleged to have made scornful remarks about the proferred hospitality—that instead of wasting money in feasts, honest and God-fearing people should meet their legal obligations; that good people would rather starve than deny their legitimate dues. The hosts had resented the attitude of the guest, and there had resulted an altercation. Upon that, the *bania* had left in a rage, saying that the invitation was a plan to poison him, and that he was going to report it to the police.

Terrified by the ominous threat, the father followed by one son, had gone with the indignant man with the object of pacifying him, so that he would not carry out his threat. Instead of being pacified, the enraged *bania* had grown more insulting, and used abusive language with reference to the women. Since one of these was the young man's wife, he had lost his temper and assaulted the vilifier who was severely wounded in consequence. Afraid that, if they left him in that condition, he would surely do the greatest possible harm, the father had aided the hasty son with the hope of finding safety in the belief that a dead man tells no tales. So, as far as those two were concerned, the murder was confessed, and law sent them to the gallows with a clear conscience. The rest were sentenced, and given the maximum punishment, on circumstantial evidence.

Granted that the prosecution case was properly proved (it must have been, technically, otherwise a competent Court would not pronounce the judgment), and that the defence story was unreliable, what about the facts that, though not mentioned in defence, constituted the setting in which the crime was committed? Itself an instrument for maintaining the social status quo, criminal justice, nevertheless, does not admit in evidence facts that are contributory to, often compel the commission of, crimes it punishes. Social causes of crime are dismissed as irrelevant to the administration of criminal justice which is an act of social coercion.

However, extenuating circumstances are taken into consideration even when the technical responsibility for the crime is proved. Was there no extenuating circumstance in this case? At least as far as the four not directly involved in the murder were concerned, particularly the women?

But the point is not this or that particular case, or punishment of individuals. It is that here we have a type of 'crime', the responsibility for which clearly belongs to the socio–political system that punishes it.

The law is not a purely political instrument, that is to say, governmental affair, as it is generally believed to be. It has a social sanction. The Indian society cannot shirk the responsibility for the legal punishment of this type of crime with the convenient plea that it had no hand in the making of the law. Didn't it? That is the question. Whence comes the shameless opposition to legislative measures meant not to harm the moneylender, but only to give some very inadequate protection to his helpless victims.* Even today, many Indian public men vehemently disapprove of projects for a radical cure of the cause of mass indebtedness which places people in such a hopeless position that they are compelled to commit crimes for the sake of remaining in human existence, supposed to be a gift of God. They want to help the peasantry, but would not do injustice to other classes. The peasants are to be helped out of their ruinous indebtedness, but the 'legitimate' right of their usurious creditors should also be respected. The nationalists are the spokesmen of the Indian society. They are opposed to the present government; but they approve of the principle of law in Courts. The principle is coercion for the maintenance of the social status quo.

Opponents of any radical measure maintain that the rural masses themselves are largely responsible for their indebtedness. The most oft-repeated argument is that they get into deep waters owing to the habit of spending beyond their means in ceremonials such as marriage, etc. In the first place, though the charge is not altogether groundless, it ignores the fundamental fact of the economic condition of the toiling masses either deliberately or through naïve disregard for realities. The fact is that such a large portion of the peasants' net income is taken away from them, in one form or another, as does not leave them, in the great majority of cases, nearly sufficient for bare existence. Practically the entire bulk of the peasantry is always short of working capital, and is obliged to borrow it. This fundamental fact of the situation not only exposes the bankruptcy of the peasant masses, but vitiates the whole system of national economy. It is so very evident that today none dare deny it. There are, of course, all sorts of explanations; but the fact remains, not to be explained away. The disease eats into the vitals of the entire social structure, and cannot be cured by quackery, whether preached by prophets who would make omelette without breaking even one single egg, or practised by a niggardly government whose hands are tied by its own nature. The latter's efforts are bound to be as ludicrously ineffective as the effort of pulling oneself up by his own bootstrings. Meanwhile, crimes of all kind must spread as ugly symptoms of a chronic disease. The legal punishment of these crimes is morally as justifiable as penalizing the victims of a contagious disease.

* See editorial note at the end of this essay. SNR.

In the second place, granted the contention that the indebtedness of the masses is to some extent due to the expenditure on ceremonials, the seekers after the root cause of the disease must ask: Whose fault is that? If those, often without the means of bare subsistence, are found as a rule to incur occasional expenditures which aggravate their plight, already hopeless, they must be acting under compulsion. Expenditure for ceremonial purposes are socially compelled. They are seldom made voluntarily. Therefore, the responsibility on that account cannot be laid at the door of the people who practise them. It belongs to religious legislation, social custom, and cultural tradition.

Religion teaches that it is the duty of children to perform certain ceremonies on the death of their parents, the default in which would not only cause inconvenience to the dead, but prejudice the post-mortem position of the defaulters themselves. These ceremonies, prescribed as religious practices, cannot however be performed in a simple religious manner—through prayer or worship, for example. They are rituals, and as such require more than a spiritual attitude. They are essentially means for paying material tribute to the administrators of the religious law.

The superstition that the deliverance of the soul of the dead is conditional upon the due performance of certain prescribed rituals having been traditionally ingrained into the popular mind, the expenses necessary for the purpose are matters of obligation, though met voluntarily by the superstitious. To hold them responsible for this ruinous habit, is no more reasonable than to rebuke a drug-addict after having forced him to cultivate the pernicious practice. Like government, religion also takes tribute; and the greater the ignorance of the faithful, the more the tribute exacted for the protection of their souls. For the Indian masses, the laws of Manu or of the Shariat or any other religious law, not only religiously administered, but often fraudulently interpreted by the custodians of the spiritual law and order, is more binding than the temporal laws of the political regime. These they obey out of fear; whereas religious laws, though no less, indeed more, ruinous economically and coercive socially, are obeyed by habit which, born of ignorance, has been skilfully cultivated through ages by the beneficiaries thereof, and is deeply entrenched in superstition fostered fanatically by the ideologists of the forces of reaction which thrive parasitically on the material misery and moral degradation of the masses.

Economic bankruptcy of the masses, progressive pauperization of the poorer strata, is a fertile breeding ground for crimes, the responsibility for which, therefore, belongs to the socio–political system which cannot exist without creating those deplorable conditions. Crimes are symptoms of social malady. The only effective and moral manner of combatting them is to get into grips with the disease, the nature of which is indicated by them. As long as there will be people driven to despair by indebtedness, inevitable because incurred under pressure of forces beyond their control, crime of the nature described above cannot be checked by any number of exemplary punishments as inflicted in this case.

Finally, there is the case of a man hanged for massacring his whole family. He was regarded as a maniac. Yet, instead of being placed in a mental hospital, the poor fellow was sent to the gallows, in strict accordance with the dictates of merciless justice. God is just and merciful; but justice, which is supposed to be an attribute of God, is merciless. Queer logic!

The crime committed by the man could be described as atrocious; nor did he deny the charge. He could not, having done his murderous deed quite openly. That is why he was described as a maniac. But his explanation of the extraordinary behaviour was highly interesting.

For some time, his wife had been regarded as a witch by the inhabitants of the village. In the beginning, he had not paid much attention to the story whispered about. But gradually, it became a matter of general belief, and he was approached by the village elders with the demand that he should drive away the mother of his children, whose presence was believed to be harmful to the village. The charge was that she could bring about the death of anybody by simply wishing it, and that a number of untimely deaths had recently occurred on that account. It is surprising that the man, himself an ignorant rustic, did not readily fall victim to the popular superstition, and do as demanded of him. It would be quite natural for him to behave so. But, to the utter chagrin of the village *vox dei*, he behaved otherwise. He refused to act on the noble model of Ramachandra; he would not sacrifice his wife, the mother of his children, to placate vulgar superstition.

For his kind, that was an incomprehensible attitude. There was no ground to assume that the villagers were moved by malice, although it could not be altogether excluded that the charge against the woman had been the result of some private animosity. However, once the rumour was afloat, the villagers generally came to believe sincerely that the woman was a witch. Sincerity, that is to say, honesty of faith, is the most fundamental characteristic of superstition. That is why superstition dies so very hard. They being honest about their belief in the evilness of the woman, it was incomprehensible for them how someone could fail to share it. The relation between the nonconformist and the persecuted woman was a matter of no consequence. What is a wife? One does not place the loyalty to a mere woman above popular suspicion, based on traditional faith. Even Ramachandra did not do so. He exiled Sita to placate public opinion. The unprecedented behaviour of the man aroused suspicion against himself. He was believed to be an accomplice of his wife. He could not possibly stand by the evil woman unless he was himself evil. Before long, there were stories about cooperation between the man and his wife in various nefarious acts. They were shunned by all the villagers who were afraid of them. The entire family came to be regarded as a brood of evil.

It was not a very pleasant position to be in. What could the poor fellow do? The whole village was scared out of wits; and the neighbourhood shared the superstition. Fear deadens reason, the very little of it possessed by the superstitious. He could not persuade the people to see that they were scared of a spectre invoked out of their credulity. Nor was he free from superstition himself. He would have been with the crowd, had the object of persecution been someone else. He did not have anything like a rational conviction to fall back upon as the unshakeable line of defence against the onslaught of popular prejudice. He was thoroughly bewildered by the turn of events. It was too late to throw the accursed woman overboard which he would have done to extricate himself and his family from the intolerable situation. The only possible way out would be to leave the village, and go away beyond the reach of the gratuitous notoriety. But even that did not hold out any convincing promise. For, he was no longer sure that his wife was not what she was suspected to be. Superstition would not permit him to see that, as he was believed to be a wizard, though he was not, so might also be the case with his wife. If his wife was really a witch, and he had come to share the general fear, what was the use of going away?

To take her along would be to remain wedded to the misfortune. So long as the lodestone hung around his accursed neck, he was sure to sink, no matter where he went. On the other hand, the idea of leaving her behind was not appealing. He was not sure that she could be so easily got rid of. Fate had placed him in a position which had no way out. There was a more potent consideration which precluded the possibility of escape. Where could he go? How should he maintain his family in a new place? All his earthly possessions consisted of a bit of land. That he must leave behind. So, should he leave the native village, with or without the impediment of the witch of a wife, the only destination would be eventual death from starvation. That was not a very alluring escape. It is in human nature to cling to the physical being, however unbearable, until it becomes psychologically impossible. Suicide is always committed in a state of temporary insanity. Despair creates the pathological condition.

The man was actually driven mad by the helplessness of his position. The crime for which he was punished, gruesome as it was, was an act of madness. The man was killed with the ceremonious sanction of law, not for any fault of his own, but because popular ignorance, fostered by our spiritual culture, drove him mad. In any case, how is society benefited by law adding murders to those committed without the sanction of law? How is it justifiable for law to commit the crime it presumes to punish? Justice is still far from being civilized. She remains a savage goddess who demands human sacrifice. And gods and goddesses are made after the image of their worshippers. If the world was really civilized, it would not worship a savage goddess with the offering of blood. You may place the offering in an electric chair; yet, it is human sacrifice.

At the last moment, a very singular case came to my notice. Being of a different type, I must record it.

In this case also, the crime is murder, committed by a young man who was sentenced for the offence to transportation for life. The victim was a religious mendicant. The judge had no doubt about the guilt of the accused; but he generously thought that it was a case in which justice might be tempered with mercy, because the crime was committed under grave provocation. The nature of the provocation makes the case interesting.

The culprit belongs to the class of wage-earners. Having failed to find any employment in his home town, he went to distant parts in quest of it. But in these days of widespread unemployment, one place is as bad as another. Consequently, the young man (he was, rather, a boy, being still in his teens) wandered from place to place, becoming, like others without number, a sort of vagrant. In course of his peregrinations in search of employment, not to be found anywhere, he happened to pick up acquaintance with the mendicant.

It is a peculiarity of Indian society that, while those willing to perform productive labour for their daily bread starve in hundreds of thousands, religious mendicancy is a profession which supports myriads of parasites. The vagrant boy told his story to the holy man, and was asked to be his *chela* in which capacity his daily bread would be provided for. Being hopeless to find any employment, the boy accepted the generous offer, and became an apprentice in the only profession which still always pays in India. But there was a condition in the contract which, though not stipulated by the holy man in the beginning, was imposed on the other party subsequently. The boy seems to have submitted for a time reluctantly to the condition which he found to be odious. Finally, he rebelled, and killed the holy man for exacting a repellant price for measly morsels of begged bread.

The boy pleaded not guilty to the charge. The body of the murdered man was found in a lonely place, and several villagers testified that they had caught the boy running away in blood-stained clothes. The story of the accused was that he had gone away for a while leaving the holy man asleep in the lonely place. On his return, he found him lying frightfully wounded and rushed to his aid. Thereupon, some men appeared on the scene and caught hold of him.

The interesting piece of evidence, which indicated the motive of the crime, was that apart from other wounds inflicted with a stout branch, the sex organ of the murdered man was smashed up. It was clear that this was not caused by any of the blows that killed the man; nor would any chance murderer select such a part for dealing blows with the purpose of killing the victim. Evidently, the tell-tale blow was delivered after the man had been killed or overwhelmed, for ventilating the repugnance to certain behaviour of the holy man which had supplied the motive of the murderer's act. The judge himself seized upon that interesting piece of evidence which, in his legalistic opinion, established the guilt of the accused, in spite of the circumstantial nature of the entire evidence against him, and, at the same time, showed that he had acted under grave provocation, thus entitling him to leniency of punishment.

There is no doubt that the boy killed the holy man; and it is also clear why the murder was committed. The question is: *morally*, who was the criminal? If one must pay the penalty for a crime committed, did not the murdered man only get his desert? The punishment was excessive? Well, that, deliberately, on sober consideration, inflicted on the boy, was no less so. The boy was admittedly driven to the crime. It might be argued that the boy could have left the holy man if he did not like complying with his demand. But that would simply be condoning the hateful behaviour of the holy man. As if he was morally justified in making the demand, because he gave the boy his daily bread. Besides, utter destitution had forced the boy to the easy profession of mendicancy. Naturally, he would be reluctant to forfeit the privilege of parasitism derived from the association with the holy man. It was morally perverse on the part of this latter to exact such a price for the privilege. It would be a different matter, had the boy voluntarily accepted the condition from the beginning. Evidently, he did not. Afraid of the dire prospect of returning to the hunt for employment, never to be found, the boy submitted to what he loathed. While reluctantly complying with the repugnant condition in payment for the privilege of eating the bread begged by the mendicant, the boy came to hate the man. The murder was the fierce expression of his hatred which the latter fully deserved.

This case reveals the practice of moral perversity that is usually hidden behind the much-vaunted virtue of celibacy. The profession of sexual continence leads to abnormal practices. Nature cannot be cheated. The vain notion that the religious can rise above the law of nature only breeds self-deception and hypocrisy. The few who really practise as well as profess continence, become psychologically deranged, given to morbid fantasies, and hallucinations (trance, etc.) glorified as tokens of spiritual elevation. These expressions of spirituality are distorted emotional states brought about by suppressed desires. Nature takes vengeance.

However, by and large, celibacy is a sham which gives rise to all sorts of licentious and perverse practices, in their turn often leading to the commission of crimes. Would not the holy man be less despicable morally if he had visited the house of a prostitute in order to satisfy his natural desire, instead of doing so in the abominable manner he adopted? Even homosexuality, as such, need not be regarded as moral degradation. Preferred to normal intercourse, it is rather an emotional morbidity to be treated psychiatrically. But with those like our holy man, it is not a matter of preference, but practised because it is cheaper and can be done clandestinely with greater facility. Thus, it must be regarded as sheer moral perversity, and those given to it condemned as corrupt criminals, masquerading in a religious guise. Rational beings could hardly adhere to, and proudly defend, a religion that encourages such corrupt and corrupting practices under the veil of venerable professions.

Not only in India, but everywhere, crimes are symptoms of social disease. They have been that throughout the ages, all over the world. And instead of treating them as such, attempts have been made to suppress them more or less cruelly with the sanction of religion, ethics, social codes, and law. The attempts have failed as they must. So long as society remains based upon ignorance, superstition, brutalization, suppression, poverty, and degradation of the masses, so that privileges of caste, sex, class (as the case may be) can be preserved, crime cannot be successfully combated, however severe may be the punitive measures, or well organized the administration of justice. The more decadent a society, the uglier and more widespread are the crimes. Forms of crimes are determined by the social conditions under which they are committed. While the majority of criminal acts are economically motivated, in India as well as in any other country socially organized as described above, the peculiar cultural atmosphere of this country breeds specific types of crime. There is still another peculiarity, which springs from the same source.

In every country, legal punishment of crime is sanctioned by the established religion and orthodox codes of morality. But as a rule, the criminal, while bowing down before legal justice, enforced by the power of the state, is more or less rebellious as regards the religion and morality which endorse his punishment. In India, the criminal's psychology co-operates with his punishment. Even if he feels that law had done him injustice, as he often does, victimization of the legally innocent being not infrequent, he himself supplies the moral justification of the injustice done to him. It is all written in his fate—result of his karma. Instead of revolting against the injustice, he finds in it divine dispensation.

Fatalism, which sums up the much advertised spiritual nature of the Indian people, teaches him to hold himself responsible not only for the social condition that have driven him to crime, but even for the legal injustice palpably done to him.

I know many a man serving long terms of imprisonment for crimes they did not commit. Yet, they are totally devoid of any moral indignation or even resentment. If the facts of social iniquity and legal injustice are pointed out to them, with a religious fervour they touch their forehead. It is all unalterably predetermined; no use complaining against it. Indeed, it is sinful to do so. They are reconciled to the hard lot, accepting it as divine dispensation. Such supine resignation to injustice is not a token of spirituality. It is moral degeneration; and this shameful psychological state of the Indian masses is our cultural heritage. Is it anything to be proud about?

Here we find religion standing naked as an instrument not only of traditional and time-honoured social oppression, but even of crass legal injustice. Religiosity has broken the backbone of the Indian people. It has crushed the spirit of revolt, which is the lever of human progress. Resignation, the characteristic feature of the Indian people, leads to stagnation which is living death. Thousands of victims of social iniquity and high-handeness of the minions of law and order, finding solace in the religious superstition of fate or karma—that is the depressing sight to be seen in Indian prisons. And the jail population being a cross-section of society outside, the sight presented by it transcends the prison walls, and provides food for serious thought to those who have the courage to distinguish facts from fictions, to look into the frowning face of rude reality.

A study of the psychology of the Indian criminals throws a flood of light on the doctrine of karma; it enables one to appreciate how spiritually corrupting and morally degrading the religious view of life is. Religion is based on ignorance. The future of India is seriously prejudiced by her cultural traditions which keep the masses in ignorance, so that superstition can remain alive as the foundation of the religious view of life. In so far as the masses are concerned, our religious or spiritual culture stands for ignorance, superstition, and fatalism. There is no future for a nation, the vast bulk of which remain in such a deplorable state of spiritual and moral backwardness. How can it be free when its cultural tradition teaches people to make a virtue of submission? And the most curious thing is that even some of the prophets of national freedom are fanatical, though not always sincere, protagonists of that very tradition which precludes the will to freedom. Thanks to this curiosity, the movement for national freedom has been caught up in a vicious circle. Revolt and submission are mutually exclusive. The first condition for national freedom is to break away from the paralysing grip of the hands of the dead past. Loyalty to the dead often amounts to betrayal of the living. The captive of the past can never conquer the future.

Editorial Note

Early in the 'thirties bills were introduced in the Bengal Legislature to relieve peasant indebtness, but these were strongly opposed by the Hindu legislators. The peasants were mostly Muslim while the moneylenders were predominantly Hindu. Besides the Marwaris and Pathans, there were private banking groups and a host of 'casual lenders'—'landlords, shopkeepers, pensioners, men in the professions, and *bhadralok* families or widows with capital to spare—who found local lending a profitable supplimentary source of income'. The interest rates were high, and debts accumulated reducing in the end most peasants to landless paupers. For details, *Report of the Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee 1929–30*, Vol 1, Calcutta 1930. In spite of Hindu opposition, the Bengal Moneylenders' Bill 1932 and Bengal Relief of Indebtedness Bill and Bengal Agricultural Debtors' Bill 1935, were enacted by the Government. These Acts 'restricted the freedom of absentee moneylenders, imposed ceilings on interest rates and set up arbitration boards empowered to liquidate a portion of agricultural debts'. For the debates, *Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Council*, Vol. XLVII. SNR

Fragments of a Prisoner's Diary Vol. II

Selections from

THE IDEAL OF INDIAN WOMANHOOD

Introductory editorial note

'The Ideal of Indian Womanhood' is one of the very last pieces that Roy wrote while he was in jail. The draft occupies pages 135 to 179 of Prison Volume No. IX. The inscription on the volume signed by the Superintendent, District Jail, Dehra Dun, gives the date 11 August 1936. Shortly after that date Roy was bedridden with acute influenza. Lying 'in the none too comfortable bed, with clothes sticky and smelly. . . staring at the ugly ceiling of the mean little room, or looking out of the window, at the red brick wall which stands forbiddingly only three feet away', his 'nights when I had high fever were dreadful' (Letter to Ellen Roy from District Jail, Dehra Dun, 24 Sept. 1936). The jail manuscripts indicate that he had been until then diligently working on his projected multi-volume study on the 'Philosophical Consequences of Modern Science'. He had already sent Ellen the tentative 'Table of Contents' of the first volume (Letter dated 23.8.36). After having made detailed notes on the 'Theory of Knowledge' (Prison Manuscript Vol VIII, dt. 28.4.36), he was preparing to begin the chapter on the 'Evidence of Biology' (Vol. IX, p. 7) when he was attacked by flu. Pages 7, verso to 134 in Volume IX, were left blank; writing was resumed from page 135. It seems that the essay on womanhood was written while he was convalescing in jail in October. Actually, in the manuscript, the text of 'The Ideal' begins on page 175, continues to page 179, goes back to page 151, continues to page 169, then goes further back to page 140, and finally to page 135. It thus grew as he reflected on the theme without having pre-planned its structure. Roy was released on 20 November 1936. The essay was edited and published by him from Dehra Dun in 1941 as the second volume of *Fragments of a Prisoner's Diary*. Besides 'The Ideal of Indian Womanhood' (pp. 1–95), this first edition also included 'Some Random Reflections' (pp. 96–152). In the second revised edition published posthumously in 1957 as *Fragments*, Vol I, 'Indian Womanhood' constituted chapter 2 (pp. 101–176), but the 'Random Reflections' were omitted.

In his preface to the first edition of *The Ideal of Indian Womanhood*, Roy wrote: 'The incentive for the reflections always came from the scrappy news of some event outside the jail. The essay which provides the title of this volume is bound to provoke controversy. . . . I have tried to prove the historical necessity for a revolution of traditional values.'

Although Roy had been actively involved in politics since 1905, the ideas he had imbibed as a young man were not narrowly confined to the single objective of political independence. Liberal and radical philosophies of the modern West had stirred up during the nineteenth century a section of the Indian urban intelligentsia which received education in English under colonial rule. An important consequence was the Indian renaissance in which Bengali intellectuals played a seminal role. All the major figures of the Bengal renaissance were aware of the urgent need for a critical revaluation of their tradition and society. Several of them realized that traditional Hindu society was very unjust towards women, that the restrictions imposed on the latter on the authority of the scriptures and custom required to be removed, that sexual inequality and exploitation had crippled both men and women in India. Personalities like Rammohun Roy (1774–1883), the radical members of the 'Young Bengal' movement, and Iswarchandra Vidyasagar (1820–91) led public campaigns to improve the condition of Hindu women. Virtually every social reformer in Bengal during the nineteenth century was more or less involved in efforts to make modern education available to women. In his book *Samya* (Equality), Bankimchandra Chatterji (1836–94), the most outstanding man of letters of his age in Bengal, exposed and condemned in his inimitably trenchant style the cruel exploitation not only of the peasantry in Bengal but also of the women in Hindu society. Bankim's writings had been one of Roy's formative influences in his youth; he had also imbibed some of the radical ideas and liberal values propagated by Brahmo intellectuals and reformers like Akshaykumar Datta (1820–86), Keshabchandra Sen (1838–84), Dwarkanath Ganguli (1844–98), Durgamohan Das (1841–97), Umeschandra Datta (1840–1907), Sivanath Sastri (1847–1919), and others.

Roy had probably not seen Begum Rokeya Hossain (1880–1932)'s landmark essay 'Amader Abanati' (Our Decline) published in 1904 in which she had proclaimed with extraordinary courage that religious scriptures which condemned woman to perpetual servitude were in fact composed by men to establish the authority of their sex and superiority to women, and that these male-made texts were then claimed to have been ordained or dictated by God himself. But he was certainly familiar with the works of Bengal's most popular novelist, Saratchandra Chatterji (1876–1938), whose book of essays, published under the title *Narir Mulya* (The Value of Woman) in 1924, severely criticized the traditional Hindu attitude and behaviour towards women, and passionately advocated sexual equality. Indeed, in his second letter from jail (6 September 1931) Roy wrote enthusiastically about Saratchandra's most controversial novel *Sesh Prasna* (The Last Question) in which the heroine, Kamal, outrages everyone by not only talking as an emancipated woman but trying to live like one. 'How she pulls down all gods—customs and traditions, sanctified through ages, and gives sound lessons to Young India which piously follows Tagore and Gandhi!' (*Letters from Jail*, p. 5). From the next letter (17 October 1931) we learn that Roy was for a while 'tempted to translate' *Sesh Prasna* which, in his view, 'is really a landmark in Indian Renaissance. It has set agog the placid and sickening atmosphere of Bengali romanticism and mystic sentimentalism.' He saw Kamal, 'the

Dionysian girl as a bold standard-bearer—no longer of revolt, but of revolution.'

The Ideal of Indian Womanhood may be perceived in this context as a continuation of the spirit of the Indian renaissance, of which the first great figures were Rammohun Roy and H. L. V. Derozio (1809–31). However, Roy's approach was more radical, his perception having been sharpened by his experiences abroad and his studies of Marx, Freud, Westermark, Frazer, and other modern thinkers. He had noted the similarity between the orthodox Hindu view of the role of women and the ideology of Fascism–Nazism. Besides adopting the Marxist method and overview, he was probably familiar with some of Marx's specific observations on the exploitation of women in patriarchal and bourgeois societies, subsequently collected and published under the titles *Marx on the Woman Question* (International, New York, 1970) and *Women and Communism* (Greenwood, Westport, Connecticut, 1973). *The Ideal* leaves us in no doubt that his view was profoundly influenced by Friedrich Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (first published in 1884). He did not mention Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) or John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* (1769), a book that had so very greatly influenced young Bankimchandra and the Brahmo youth of the late nineteenth century. But he had read August Bebel's *Women and Socialism* (1883), was a very close friend of the disciples of Rosa Luxemburg (1870–1919), and was a colleague of not a few outstanding women who occupied leading positions in the Communist International in the 1920s, such as, Angelica Balabanoff, Clara Zetkin, Alexandra Kollontai, and Ruth Fischer. Angelica was the Secretary of the Comintern at its foundation Congress, and she subsequently published her fascinating autobiography, *My Life as a Rebel* (1938). Alexandra was successively Soviet Ambassador to Norway and Sweden, and plenipotentiary in Mexico, and she wrote several books, among them, *The Social Basis of the Women's Question* (1909), *Society and Motherhood* (1916), *Women and the Economic Evolution* (1921), and *The Woman Worker and Peasant in Soviet Russia* (1921).

Although the Communist movement under Stalin and in the post-Stalin era was as much male-dominated as any patriarchal society (and even today a female communist top-ranking personality is as rare in India as in Russia and East Europe), in the early years of the Comintern there were a number of women at the top of the hierarchy. Roy's break with the Comintern, it seems to me, took place at the right moment. He carried into the prison the spirit not only of the Bengal renaissance but also of pre-Stalinized Marxism and of the Comintern of the twenties.

When Roy wrote this essay behind bars, the movement of women's emancipation and sexual equality was still at a rather early stage even in the West. Women won voting rights in the USA in 1920; in the United

Kingdom, in 1918 women of thirty years of age and above were granted the right to vote; in 1928 their voting age was reduced to 21, the same as for men. In 1927 was published Virginia Woolf's feminist essay *A Room of One's Own*; but modern feminism did not get off the ground before the publication of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* in 1949. If Roy's essay was a continuation of the Bengal renaissance, its radicalism was also very much in advance of his time, especially in the Indian context. Despite the changes and improvements that have taken place in the condition of women since independence, much of Roy's critique still remains valid and relevant even after the passage of nearly sixty years.

The text which follows is based on the 1941 edition. Where passages have been left out, this is indicated by ellipses (. . .).

SNR.

The Ideal of Indian Womanhood

. . . It is reported that the other day Margaret Sanger interviewed Mahatma Gandhi, and had a prolonged discussion with him on the question of birth-control. Since then, the controversy has been carried on in the press. The opposing arguments are familiar enough. But the interesting point is that the Mahatma disapproves not of birth-control as such, but of the use of contraceptives for the purpose. He is of the opinion that married people should abstain from sex intercourse, if they don't want children. He simply brushed aside the complications which will surely result from the proposed practice of married celibacy. He would not admit that this novel method of birth control is a physical impossibility for the ordinary mortal made of flesh and blood.

Then, there arises the obvious question—Why marry at all? Why does not the Mahatma recommend mass *brahmacharya*? Instead of making the curious proposition that each home should be transformed practically into a monastery, why not advise young men and women to become monks and nuns The answer is not difficult to find. For the Hindu, marriage is a religious duty. But then comes the contradiction: to breed is also a religious duty. According to Hinduism, the object of marriage is to have children. Childless marriage is regarded as a misfortune. If the wife fails to give birth to children, the husband is entitled to marry again. If we are to be guided by strict scriptural injunctions, birth control, even as advised by Gandhi, cannot be legitimately practised. Because, that would be violating scriptural rules and social traditions. Yet, Gandhi takes his stand precisely on these grounds. Two questions are involved in the controversy. One about sex intercourse; is it sinful, except when performed for breeding? Is it not a physical and emotional necessity, irrespective of the act of procreation? Is it harmful for spiritual (in the broad sense of mental and emotional) development? The other question is about the position of women in Hindu society.

Gandhi advises women to resist lustful husbands. [This] assumes that they are free agents. Are they? Does Hinduism permit women to resist their husbands? Moreover, Gandhi's approach to the problem of sex intercourse has no regard for personal inclination. He looks at it from what he considers to be a religious and moral point of view, the morality being a peculiarly dogmatic brand of his own. Therefore, he advises women to do something which is totally incompatible with their place in society, allotted to them by religion and tradition.

Let alone the position of women in Hindu society; even in modern countries, where women have much more rights than in India, resistance is a legitimate ground for divorce. It is regarded as a violation of the marriage contract. Of course, one hears much about the spirituality of the Hindu institution of marriage: it is not a mere contract, but a religious sacrament. Granted it is so, it only imposes a great obligation on the women. It is not a contract made voluntarily by the parties concerned. It is a sacrifice of the woman; the proprietary right over her is transferred to the husband, and the transaction is sanctified by religion. The essence of the Hindu marriage ceremony is that the parents of the girl make of her a gift to the groom, who may have to be coaxed to accept the gift with additional inducements of more concrete value. Evidently not much importance is attached to the intrinsic value of the girl. However, the condition on which the bridegroom accepts the gift, is that the girl will obediently perform all the wifely duties laid down by religious codes and social customs. To bear children is the most fundamental of those duties. So, the possibility of resistance is altogether ruled out, if wives are to be up to the ideals of Hindu womanhood. The *summum bonum* of these is complete subservience to the husband, who is to be served, pleased, and worshipped as a god, even as the God. If the deified husbands are so perverse as to find pleasure in sex intercourse, as they usually are, what are the wives to do? They have no choice. The freedom to love or not to love is not a part of the noble ideal of Hindu womanhood. It is a religious duty, indeed obligation, of the woman to serve and satisfy the husband in every way, whether she loves him or not; and what is still worse, whether he loves her or not. . . .

Many fables have been fabricated about the exalted position of the woman in Hindu society. There are volumes of legends about it. Even today, lyrics are woven around that fiction. Hinduism is said to concede perfect equality to women. They are granted the status of the goddesses, though of the household variety. Granted that godly status, why should they hanker after worldly rights and privileges? These transitory, and, therefore negligible, things are not included in the perfect equality of women in Hindu society. Their lives are consummated in the mystic, indissoluble, union with their husbands. They are above the selfishness of the desire for any individual social or spiritual existence. Love, with them, is not lust, degraded to the level of carnal relations. It is a spiritual passion for giving; their own selves, being the best of the gifts, they lay at the feet of the beloved, who may not reciprocate the passion in a similar way. They love without wanting to be loved. They give without asking for anything in return. They find a pleasure in giving, in loving. The Hindu woman is the incarnation of selflessness. No wonder that men should appreciate her virtue and enshrine her in the temple of domesticity, where she enjoys endless privileges, including the bearing of unwanted children. This fiction of a spiritual union gilds the galling chains of chattel slavery.

All these fables, fictions, and lyrics, however, cannot make the seeker after truth blind to the fact that the codes of Manu deprive women of all independence. Always, throughout her life, she must be under the protection of some male or other. Protection is an euphemistic term for subordination. As a matter of fact, Manu specifies the periods of a woman's life, in which she 'belongs' respectively to the father, husband, and the son; and the refrain of the famous code is that the woman can never be independent. The codes of Manu are said to be the treasure-house of the highest and noblest social ideals. The bulk of our modern women are still deluded by those spurious jewels. But there are some who are realizing the reality of their position. The other day, one of them exploded the bubble of the fondly cherished delusions, and laid bare the lie about the exalted position of the woman in Hindu society.

> In India, for centuries, the woman's drama of life has been enacted on a puppet stage crowded with futile, frustrated and tragic characters, and it is a drama that appears to have evolved the highest religious sentiments. Her mute surrender to things as they had been ordained became synonymous with the highest manifestation of feminine virtue and the glory attached to it. The more she bore injustice and wrong without murmur, the more she subjugated her personal life to the dictates of primitive proprietary tribalism, the more woman-like, the more virtuous, she became. For centuries, the woman was regarded as a living ware that should belong to some man; so she was married off at the earliest possible opportunity. Once possessed, she went through life as man's possession—never as a playmate, not even a plaything, but just a possession.*

The pious defenders of Indian traditions and the ideals of Indian culture are perturbed by the spread of Western influence among the educated women of the younger generation. They not only deplore the tendency, but publicly castigate the corrupt for deserting the noble ideals of Indian womanhood. But in doing so, they themselves expose the significance of those cherished ideals.

In a meeting held on 20 March 1936 under the auspices of the Delhi Women's League, such an authoritative exponent of Hindu culture as Dr Bhagwan Das declared: 'We must not talk in terms of equality between man and woman. They are both halves of humanity. We must rather talk in terms of companionship than equality.' It is all very bewildering—this mystification of the simplest things. For harmonious relationship between man and woman, equality is not necessary. But these very custodians of Indian culture, as politicians, criticize the doctrine of India's partnership in the British Empire on the ground that true partnership is possible only on the basis of equality. Have they been talking nonsense all this time? Or do they talk through their pugrees or

---

* Nilima Devi, *Hindusthan Times*, 10 Feb. 1936.

Gandhi caps, while expounding the metaphysics of the relation between man and woman? Evidently the latter is the case; for, the position they take up as politicians is undoubtedly sound.

Halves are not equals—queer arithmetic! If halves are not equal, then, they are not halves. A nonexisting relation is idealized so that the negation of equality may appear plausible. What is the corollary to this axiom of mystic mathematics? The partnership between man and woman is not equal. We are taught that the Hindu institution of marriage binds two souls in a unified existence. If the components are not equal, clearly, one is more than the other. Which is the superior? The man, of course. Companionship is a myth. Man is the protector of the weaker vessel which he owns. That is the law of Manu.

Why deny equality? Have women no souls? Souls are supposed to be so many sparks of the Divine Light. Thus, to deny women equality with men is a blasphemy against the fundamental tenets of Hinduism. But when it comes to the vital question of proprietary right, religion can go by the board if it happens to contradict the most precious principle of social relations. In the feudal–patriarchal society, woman is regarded and treated as a part of man's worldly possessions. Therefore, the defenders of the ideals of ancient India cannot tolerate the talk of equality between man and woman.

But despite all the panegyrics of its fictitious ideals, the feudal–patriarhal society is an ugly ghost of the past. It lies in ruins, waiting to be cleared away. The ancient ideals have lost all force, their social foundation having been undermined by time and by the impact of modern civilization. They can be defended only with sophisticated arguments, if the defenders are reluctant to play the damaging role of rank reactionaries. The worm, however, is turning. In a rapidly growing number, young educated women are refusing to be deluded by fables, to be taken in by the sophistry of the 'modern Rishis'. They live under changing social conditions, and consequently cannot escape the contagion of new ideals. The crisis created by the rise of modern women, inspired by the new ideals of a real freedom and partnership on the basis of equality, has been vividly depicted by one of them already quoted above. Let me quote her once again.

> Any woman, who dares to solve her personal problems outside the rigid framework of the feudalistic system in which she is born, runs the risk of not only being regarded as a rebel, but also labelled a woman militant. Any slight ruffling of the placid surface of Indian life looks to the die-hard a portent of storm. The defenders of a system that has relied for its maintenance on the perpetuation of injustice to a large majority of its members, would naturally take fright at the faintest rattling of their prisoners' chains. And who have been more enslaved under this system than the Indian women? Among the most vocal exponents of the women's movement are scarcely to be found the

> representatives of those who have suffered the worst and endured the most.[2] Were these women to speak out, Indian society would be faced with a problem far more ominous than the alarmists could imagine.

If the legend about the exalted position of woman in Hindu society had any foundation of fact, there would be no cause for this crisis. Why should women rebel, if they had really enjoyed the respect and companionship of men? Lest the above voice of a courageous pioneer be dismissed as the ranting of a blind fanatic, I shall cite the opinion of one who cannot be accused of running down Indian culture wantonly.

In his farewell address to the students of the Andhra University, in March 1936, Sir S. Radhakrishnan pronounced the following severe judgement.

> Religious bigotry, which treats millions of our countrymen in a senseless and inhuman way, and imposes intolerable disabilities and inconveniences on the womanhood of the country, is a standing danger. It is corruption of the spirit. Those who impose such disabilities on other human beings are themselves victims of ignorance and superstition.

But what should we think when we find national leaders defending those disabilities, and denouncing whoever revolts against the inequitous system, as misguided by false ideals? Superstitious most of them are, more or less, but they cannot claim the credit of the bliss of ignorance. They know what they are talking about. Their opposition to all new ideas and movements is deliberate. They are defenders of an antiquated social order, based upon the slavery of the multitude, sanctified by religion. Ideas of equality and freedom are foreign to the 'spiritualist' tradition of India. The belief in the fictitious equality of immaterial souls, together with the doctrine of spiritual liberation, dismisses social equality and worldly freedom as paltry things, not to be bothered about. My soul is free; how can I ever be a slave The stark reality of social slavery is obscured by the fiction of a free soul. . . .

Deprecating the demand of modern women, Dr Bhagwan Das, in the speech quoted above, expounded the Hindu doctrine about marriage and family.

> Marriage is not a picnic; it is a discipline which people must carry out. Society would break up, if men and women forgot the sacredness of marriage, and talked of it in loose terms. In India, family is the unit of society; in the West, the individual. Our system is undoubtedly the best. Indians don't believe in individualism. Our ideal is humanism, familyism.

There we have the naked truth, told by a 'modern Rishi'. The relation between man and woman is clearly defined. The Indian ideal of womanhood is depicted realistically; and it is a matter of categorical imperative. There *must* be discipline; laws laid down for the governance of a patriarchal society must be obeyed, even today in the midst of the twentieth century. Marriage is not a picnic, we are told. What does that men? It means that marriage is not a companionship; that it is an indissoluble bond which deprives woman of all freedom, denies her the right to an individual existence. A wife is not a human being. For her, there are only duties to be performed, not voluntarily, but under an inflexible discipline. The doctrine of discipline, which prohibits even freedom of thought, transforms the individual into an automaton. A society, composed of robots, who do not think, but only obey, is a prison. Laws are sovereign only when they are made by common consent.

There might be some excuse for this autocratic doctrine of social and family relations, if discipline was demanded from all concerned. But that is not the case. It is neither a matter of argument nor of theory. It is a matter of fact that, while with women scripturally prescribed discipline is an absolute bondage, with men, it is a matter of mere formality. Indeed, even theoretically, the burden of discipline is not equitably distributed. Man, as the father and husband, is the disciplinarian; the burden of discipline falls on the woman. The Hindu marriage ceremony does not establish a relation of companionship. It places the woman under the protection of the man. And the social protectorate of man over woman is no more an 'alliance for existence' for mutual benefit than political protectorate of the stronger powers over the weak. In either case, protectorate is a camouflaged form of possession. . . .

For women, Hindu marriage is certainly not a picnic. There is no question of love, except as a *post factum* make-believe. Marriage is not a voluntary contract to be carried out by both the parties under prescribed laws. Women are simply handed over to new masters, to whom they are to be bound forever. When responsibility is not voluntarily incurred, discipline cannot be morally demanded. Let women choose; let marriage be conditional on an intelligent consent on their part; then talk of discipline. To demand discipline under an involuntary relation, a relation established by a transfer of proprietorship, is coercion, pure and simple. The Hindu marriage grants women no rights whatsoever; it imposes only obligations.[3] Discipline under such circumstances is compulsion to discharge responsibilities not voluntarily contracted. And a responsibility has no moral force unless it is voluntarily assumed. One cannot be held responsible for some act he has not committed. It is not my duty to perform acts that I have never undertaken to do. The concepts of duty and responsibility presuppose agreement. In the absence of previous agreement, there is neither duty nor responsibility. So, the question of discipline under the relation established by Hindu marriage does not arise.

We are told pontifically that society would break up if men and women forgot the sacredness of marriage and talked of it in loose terms.

Well, it is a well known fact that men generally seldom abide by the sacred vow; yet, society has not fallen to pieces. But the foundation of society would be shaken if women expressed dissatisfaction at the treatment accorded to them. So, the bond of sacredness is only for them; and it is very sacred, though it is certainly a bond. The taboo on 'talk in loose terms' means prohibition of the criticism of an established relation which has become galling—utterly incompatible with changed social relations, and intolerable for women growing up under these conditions. Women should not even complain. For them, it is indecent to have any grievance. They must remain fascinated by the fictitious ideals placed before them. The laws laid down by Manu ages ago are still immutable. . . .

For all practical purposes, Hinduism prohibits divorce only in the case of women; it grants men all its benefits. When the marriage bond does not bind him to anything, man does not require the right of divorce. The Hindu horror for divorce is based on the principle that women naturally are not entitled to the freedom of sex relation enjoyed by men to the extent of downright licentiousness, with the sanction of religion. That is not a very moral principle. In fact, there is no morality in it at all. The underlying idea is of proprietorship. The woman is a part of man's worldly possessions. She is a field for him to cultivate. She is naturally destined to bear him children, just as his land bears him fruit. A man is entitled to own as many plots of land as he can afford to. Similarly, he can possess more than one wife. But it is unnatural for his wife to dispute his right of proprietorship, even to pass on to the possession of another man. Whoever has ever heard of a plot of land or any other piece of property claim the right of choosing its owner? It is natural for a piece of property to be owned, and for the owner to add to his possession. Therefore, it is also 'natural' for women to live in indissoluble wedlock, while the lord and master is free to add to his possession.

But the freedom of sex relation on the part of women is no more unnatural than are the forms of society not based on private property. The sex impulse is the only natural thing in this relation. The condition under which that impulse is satisfied is a matter of social convention, and as such must change from time to time in course of social progress.

Divorce is condemned on the ground that it is not compatible with the ideal of Indian womanhood. It was on this ground that Dr Bhagwan Das denounced the Western practice of divorce. The ideal thus is subordination of women to men—an absence, in the case of the former, of the freedom of sex relation which is accorded to the latter. That certainly is not a very noble ideal. Enlightened women, at any rate, can no longer be deluded by it; nor can it be justified, much less glorified, by freethinking men with a sense of justice and morality.

While our nationalist leaders wax eloquent about traditional ideals, the reactionary nature of which is palpable to anyone able to distinguish facts from fiction, there are others who have the courage and progressive spirit to take a realistic view of the position of women in Hindu society, and plead for the much-needed improvement. The following, for example, is quoted from a speech by the Maharani of Baroda, who certainly cannot be accused of any feminist extravagance, nor suspected of the insidious spirit of revolt against the Hindu culture.

> Far from allowing her that equality with man, which in modern society is her natural and inalienable right, the law as it stands in by far the greater part of the country places her at a most unfair disadvantage. According to the Hindu Law, the joint family comprises only the male members; a woman is not a co-partner, but a mere dependent, with no right of ownership in the joint property. Why do you allow yourselves to be manacled and led captive, as it were, by laws which were made for a society which differed from our own as much as chalk differs from cheese? Manu and the rest of them made excellent laws for their own time, perhaps. But why should you take them as final pronouncements? Are they the Will of God? Certainly not. They are statements of men's thought or their prejudice. Indeed, when I think of the laws they made against women, they seem to write like men who have been bitten by some serpent, so poisonous is their attitude. Their laws seem almost to breathe hatred for us. How can I help thinking so, when the law, from birth to death, makes a woman a subordinate, stifles her, so to say, in the cradle; and then says: thus and thus shalt thou live? Live? The word in their mouths mocks us! For, how can a woman live, when she is deprived of any vestige of freedom from the beginning? First, we must bow before our fathers, then, our husbands, then husbands' relatives. Does it strike you as a just state of affairs? Would you tamely sit down under a system of law that does not allow even to call your soul your own? Is that true law or true religion? I do not blame Manu, for after all, it may be that he honestly did his best according to his lights. But those lights burn dim in the twentieth century India.*

Those are passionate pronouncements; but they cannot be deprecated and dismissed as the ranting of wayward youth, corrupted by Western influence. There we have indubitable facts, as against the fiction about the exalted position of women in Hindu society. It goes without saying that the speaker is not a revolutionary. She would not advocate complete subversion of the feudal–patriarchal relationship which places upon women the disabilities so very scathingly condemned by herself. Nevertheless, she is far more progressive than most of our nationalist leaders who hold that the last word of human wisdom was pronounced by the legendary lawgivers of ancient India. She also is an admirer of Hindu culture; but her admiration is not blind. She can see things in their historical perspective; and that is the sensible manner of appreciating the positive values of past cultures.

---

* Address to the students of the Poona Law College, 5 April 1936.

Laws governing the relation between man and woman under the conditions of society thousand years age, are not suitable to the circumstances of our time. To dispute this view is to deny history. Those laws might have been good in their time; they were certainly useful for the circumstance of the social system of the epoch. But from that it does not follow that they are good or even useful for ever. When social institutions become obsolete, they must be discarded. Those suffering from their continued existence are bound to revolt. The advocates of progress must foment that historically necessary revolt. The Hindu system of marriage is an antiquated institution. Its usefulness has disappeared with the disruption of the patriarchal family. Whether in the past it was good or bad, is a question of social research. The question is of great importance for a critical appreciation of the ancient Indian culture; but it is irrelevant for the purpose of solving the problem which faces us toady. The question of today is what position women should occupy in a modern society. We are not living in the age of Manu. Modernization of Indian society is a historical necessity. Consistent with this necessity, can it hold on to traditional ideas and maintain old institutions which deprive women of elementary human rights? In order to answer the question correctly, facts must be faced. The situation must be regarded realistically. Instead of doing that, they talk of mystic ideals of Indian womanhood. Since the position of women in Hindu society cannot be justified in the face of indisputable facts, fictions are fabricated. But facts are the decisive factor. They shall carry conviction.

In the above quotation, we have a realistic picture of the social status of Hindu women. The facts cannot be denied. How do the admirers of the ideal of Indian womanhood answer the challenge which is all the more formidable because it comes from a conservative quarter? In the face of these stark realities about the position of women in patriarchal families, they glorify this antiquated social institution. . . .

The deplorable fact is that a great many of our political leaders have no patience for the modern woman who demands economic rights, social emancipation, and a single standard of sex relation. While some combat these new-fangled Western ideas by holding high before the misguided the mystic ideal of Indian womanhood, there are others who do not make any bones about the true nature of that ideal, and presume to show the woman her place. Of course, they also rely on the authority of the wise men of the past, and hold up the light of ancient wisdom as the infallible guide for those who wish to avoid the pitfalls of the temptations of modern life. Only, in doing so, they burst the bubble of the ideal of Indian womanhood, because they tell frankly what according to venerable traditions, really is the place of woman in Hindu society.

Having been sermonized by a modern Rishi, the meeting of the Delhi Women's League had the privilege of being lectured also by a modern politician. It was Bhulabhai Desai who is known to be cynical about equality in any walk of life. An eulogizing nationalist newspaper reported him to have administered 'some bitter pills' to the naughty women who allow themselves to be influenced by modern ideas imported from the benighted West, and consequently turn away from the ideals set before them by the wise men of the past, particularly the immortal and infallible Manu.

Mr Desai deprecated the 'false issue of antagonism between men and women'; then he asserted that this 'false issue has been falsely borrowed by India' from foreign quarters. Presumably, the assertion is that Indian social conditions do not provide any reason for the issue to rise. Such an assertion implies that in Indian society women are in no way subordinated to men, that the relation is so equitable and harmonious as to obviate the possibility of any antagonism. Disregarding all the facts about the realities of women's life, in the present as well as in the past, the speaker declared that 'man has always placed woman on a higher and better status.' Now, that is a legend pure and simple. Mr Desai himself admitted that. He directly went on to describe the 'higher and better status' which is supposed to be graciously granted to women by men, and with which the former should remain content. He exclaimed: 'Don't fight a war of revenge; don't say 'I am a toy, a breeding machine'; don't try to send men to the kitchen. Yours is the greatest profession in the world, in which nobody can compete with you. It is no use trying to play a thing you are not. Don't enter the arena of the struggle for existence which belongs to man.'

This paternalism means denial of economic freedom to women. You cook for me, bear children to inherit my property, and I shall protect you. Of course, who does not take care of the means of production? As regards the struggle for existence, no amount of benevolent, though interested, paternalism, can keep women out of the fray. Only the fortunate few can keep their women in idleness. The great majority are caught in the vortex. They are not pet idols, but chattels. Desai tried to rationalize his doctrine of patriarchal servitude with the following argument: 'They are different by nature. You cannot alter the creation of nature. A man will remain a man; and so is the case of women.' If there is any woman who wanted to have a physical transformation, that is a matter of Desai's personal knowledge. The question of sex equality does not involve such obvious absurdities. But it is a different proposition to sanction social inequality on the pretext of a difference of physical structure. Women want equality as human beings. We are told *ad nauseum* that Hindu culture is based on the doctrine of equality of everything before God. Don't the women have souls? Besides, the appeal to natural distinction is a double-edged sword. It would be equally reasonable to defend the doctrine of 'White Man's Burden' with this appeal. If the male is entitled to protect the female thanks to the biological distinction, is it not equally reasonable for the white race to have a similar claim on the strength of the colour of their skin?

But there seem to be women in India (marring her holiness with their Western perversity) who are not to be fooled by patriarchal protection or romantic deception. The President of the meeting, presumably to the horror of the distinguished preachers of the Indo-German ideals of womanhood, insisted that 'it cannot be denied that women are kept in all sorts of bondage'. With a subtle irony, which must have sounded as pleasing flattery to the egoistic evangelists, she said: 'If all men were modern Rishis, there would be no women's movement.'

We no longer need dig into the neglected store of ancient wisdom to find the Indian ideal of womanhood. We can find it in the accursed West itself, as represented, for example, by the Germany of the Kaiser or of Hitler. The imperial lord of the Germans placed before women the ideals of the *Kirche*, *Kueche*, *Kinder*—respectively meaning, Church (religion), housekeeping, and children. Under the ill-fated Republic, the German women turned their back on these traditional 'Aryan' ideals. The lamentable forces of degeneration have been arrested by the Nazis, who have resurrected the Indo-German ideal of womanhood by their characteristic methods. Women have been sent back to the kitchen by the ordinance of the authoritarian State which recognizes no individual right. That is also a striking example of Indian social philosophy, practised by the avowed enemies of democratic freedom. 'Marry and multiply'—that is the order for women, not only in Hitler's Germany, but also in Mussolini's Italy. And those are the countries in which the vulgar materialistic features of modern Western civilization have entirely eclipsed its human values. The warlords require a plentiful supply of cannon-fodder. For that purpose, women have been driven out of all other occupations. They must stay at home and breed children.

The ideal of Indian womanhood, instead of being spiritually inspired, is of such a materialistic nature that it can fit into the scheme of a social philosophy which incorporates the worse features of Western culture.

* * *

To do justice to women, it should be noted with the strongest emphasis that the ideal was not conceived by themselves; it was set before them by men—by those 'wise men of ancient life'—moved by the vulgar materialstic considerations of their age. The conditions of the time compelled women to accept the position assigned to them. They had no alternative. In a society based upon patriarchal family, man is the lord and master. Deprived of all economic rights, the woman has to submit. Then, there was propagands, in the form of religion, mythology, and romantic literature, for justifying the economic subjugation of women, and glorifying their status of domestic chattel and breeding machines. Under those circumstances, women could be easily persuaded to believe in the ideals set before them. In course of time, their subordination to man, their expropriation, their social disfranchisement, their domestic slavery, their concubinage, assumed the appearance of voluntary self-abnegation, inspired by some mystic ideal of womanhood. The glittering gilt of their chain made the slaves happy in their servitude.

That was the Golden Age—of domestic harmony and social concord when there were no perverse women to demand economic freedom, to complain of being a toy, a breeding machine. Deluded by the legends of Sitas and Savitris, they all faithfully and efficiently performed their 'natural' profession—to be religious (according to the dogmas of orthodoxy), to keep house, and to procreate at the pleasure of man.

But that Golden Age is a thing of the past. Its foundation—patriarchal family—lies in ruins, to be cleared away so that a new social structure can be raised in its place. The great bulk of women still remain in the bliss of ignorance, entrenched in superstition—that specific heritage of our 'spiritual culture'. There are those who, though not favoured fully with the bliss, still continue with the time-honoured illusions as a matter of habit. But some have become conscious of the realities of their position at home as well as in society; they have realized the fraudulent nature of the ideal haloed by tradition, glorified in romantic legends, and sung in mystic lyrics. They are growing in number. The spread of modern education is not the only cause of the awakening. It is primarily due to the slow, but sure, decomposition of an antiquated social order, the scheme of the cultural superstructure of which necessarily included mystic ideals veiling the subordination of woman to the status of chattels.

Now that a growing number of women can no longer be deluded by mystic ideals, and demand to be treated as individuals capable of doing the thinking for themselves, the traditional overlordship is defended in a plain language, such as the 'bitter pills' administered by Desai. If it is true that 'man has always placed woman on a higher and better status', how is the 'hostility between them' to be explained? The only plausible explanation will be want of appreciation and gratitude on the part of the woman. Even the stoutest opponent of the demands and aspirations of the modern woman would find it difficult to bring that manifestly false charge against Indian womanhood. Besides, 'hostility between sexes' is a scarecrow. If there is any hostility, it is on the part of those very men who complain of the spirit. Being out of sympathy with the ideas and ideals of the modern woman, those old-fashioned males are naturally hostile to them. The fear of hostility on the part of women, of a revolt of the angels, of a 'war of revenge', reveals a bad conscience on the part of men. Consciousness of the fact that women have been wronged for ages makes them apprehensive of the possible growth of a spirit of vengeance on the part of the former.

Modern women, however, are rebelling not against men, but against certain social codes and economic disabilities which place them under the domination of the male. There is no sex war. That is an absurd idea. There cannot be any antagonism between the sexes. Sex impulse is a force that attracts. In sex relation itself, there can never be any inequality, either party being equally indispensable. As a rule, women cannot do without men any more than the male can dispense with the female. Inequality is in the relation between man and woman, as social units. The revolt of the modern woman is not a revolt of the female against the male; it is a revolt of one category of social units against another; of a group of the suppressed against the suppressor, rather against the conditions of their suppression—those social and domestic conditions which do not correspond with the relation of natural equality of the sexes.

So, it was quite irrelevant to exclaim at a modern women's gathering, 'Don't wage a war of revenge!' But the speaker had a guilty conscience, which was evidenced by the following exhortation—'Don't say, I am a toy, a breeding machine'. He did not deny the fact that his social philosophy reduced women to toys and breeding machines. On the contrary, he told his audience to be satisfied with the 'higher and better status' which man had granted to women, to carry on 'the greatest profession', in which no man could compete. What is that profession? To bear children—to be breeding machines! That, then, is the 'higher and better status'—the real content of the mystic ideal of Indian womanhood. Because, in the opinion of the protagonist of that reactionary ideal, those Indian women, who would not be satisfied with the 'greatest profession', were allured by 'false ideals borrowed from the West'. But the profession is not a grant of men; nor have any normal woman the least desire to abstain from it. In the framework of the patriarchal family—the type of family idealized by the Indian opponents of social progress—women perform their natural profession not as free agents, but under conditions laid down for the convenience of men. Modern women revolt against those conditions, which deprive them of freedom, theirs by birthright.

There is no sex war. The demand is for equality in sex relation in society. When this natural right is denied, on the absurd plea that women did not miss it in the past, there is bound to be some bitterness. But the responsibility of that undesirable atmosphere belongs to the reactionary male, who cannot see, or will not see, that the demand grows out of a radical change in the economic position of women. The change is brought about by the inevitable breakdown of an antiquated system of social relations which unfortunately persisted in the India much longer than in the more advanced countries. . . .

In the absence of economic independence, supremacy in domestic affairs is a myth. Only as fully enfranchised citizens can women really be the queens of home. The natural ideals of womanhood are not incompatible with the greater ideals of the modern woman. It is idle to idealize home when to have a home is becoming a problem for a growing number of women. An ideal home can no longer be created by man alone. The privilege is reserved for the fortunate few who live on unearned income. But the great majority, particularly of the middle-class, are dependent on individual earning capacity which, in most cases, is quite insufficient for keeping even a small family on a tolerable standard of living. The way out of this difficulty is to broaden the basis of the cooperation between man and woman. If young people are to create pleasant homes and raise healthy families, women must share the economic responsibility. What are they to cook, when the larder is empty? What is the joy of motherhood, if their lives are to be tormented and embittered by the care of ill-fed children? If women are to share the responsibility, which hitherto has been man's, they cannot be denied the rights traditionally reserved for man. They are entitled, morally as well as legitimately, to economic independence. That means not only right of inheritance, which will be a mere legal formality in the case of the great majority. It means appearance of women in the departments of life hitherto closed for them. Their activities can no longer be confined to home. For the sake of making a home, worth the name at all, they must transcend the limits of domesticity. Today, social equality of the sexes is necessary for the performance of their respective functions, which in the past could be done under a different relation. The recognition of woman as an individual member of society is necessary for the preservation of family—of course, in a different form. The new type of family, which is bound to replace the disrupted joint family, shall have to be a voluntary association of individuals, both the sexes having the same status as individual members of society.

Society originated as a voluntary association of individuals. But the old patriarchal family eclipsed the individual. A society which suppresses the individual runs contrary to its own historical purpose. The individual—man as well as woman—is prior, not only to family, but society itself, the latter being a creation and an association of individuals. Therefore, the assertion of the individual as the component of family is historically necessary; it is a progressive step which has to be taken under the pressure of the changed social conditions.

Independent economic activities on the part of women will necessarily mean some competition with men. But there will be no antagonism. For, generally, they will represent cooperation between the sexes on a larger sphere. As independently functioning members of society, women will become full partners of men. There will be real companionship.

Placed on a more secure economic foundation, the family will be an institution, happier and healthier than ever.

* * *

The Indian critics of the Western women are ignorant of the fact that it is thanks to the extension of her activities outside the traditional sphere of the home, that the institution of family, undermined by capitalism, has been kept intact. The ignorant critics denounce divorce, but know nothing about the cooperation between man and woman in the modern countries of the West. The prevailing mass unemployment would have destroyed by starvation thousands and thousands of families but for the women's activity outside home. Masses of women act as breadwinner, when men are forced to remain idle. That kind of cooperation demands unstinted admission of equality, of men and women as members of society. That is real partnership, which rejects the traditional notion of the division of labour, of distinct fields of activity appropriated respectively for the sexes. Real partnership is possible only when the relation between husband and wife ceases to be that of the protector and the protected.

Nor is it only in the West that masses of women are compelled to share the economic responsibility of keeping up the family, to function as partners of men outside home. In India also, multitudes of women occupy a similar position; only, they remain deprived of the right which should be theirs legitimately, in return for the economic responsibility they shoulder. They do labour, and consequently contribute to the family exchequer; but they do not do so as independent individuals; they are treated as beasts of burden. All women belonging to the lower classes, particularly the peasantry, are in that position. The glorious ideals of Indian womanhood is not for them. For the bulk of Indian womanhood, the ideal stands naked as chattel-slavery.

Therefore, Desai did not know what he was talking about, when he advised women not to 'enter the arena of the struggle for existence which belongs to men'. Whatever may be the wisdom of this advice, given by our modern Draco,[4] it certainly has no sense for the majority of Indian women, who are deeply involved in the struggle for existence, have been so from time immemorial, even in the legendary Golden Age, not by choice, with any perverse spirit of antagonism, but out of stark necessity. Now, even the women belonging to the next higher stratum of society are being drawn in that struggle. Thanks to the breakdown even of the precarious skeleton of the joint family, an increasingly large number of middle-class women are finding it difficult to have the traditional protection of husbands who, in return for that questionable privilege, could occupy the position of the lord and master of the family. When thousands of young men are defeated in the economic struggle for existence, for no fault of theirs, at least a corresponding number of women must look out for themselves. Middle-class women, in progressively increasing number, shall be entering the arena of the struggle for existence, not by choice, but under compulsion.[5] It is easy enough to warn them off; but what is the alternative? The kind concern for keeping the 'weaker sex' out of the vicissitudes of the economic struggle for existence may sound very magnanimous. But only the naïve will be deceived by such cheap demagogy. The cynically minded easily see the significance of such modern paternalism. It is a denial of economic freedom to women. What the women are told, in effect, is: 'You keep house for men, bear them children to inherit their property, and they will protect you; if you happen to be fortunate enough, you may even be pampered.' In other words, the women are enjoined to be breeding machines, and perchance toys in exceptional cases; but not to complain. Because, that is their natural function. The cat is out of the bag.

The crucial question, however, is: How many women in contemporary India can have even the questionable privilege of the benevolent protection of man? How many men can honestly and confidently offer such protection? Very few in either case. That is a fact, and that fact alone is going to revolutionize the relation between man and woman, to compel the recognition of women, no less than that of men, as individuals to promote the rise of a new type of family on the ruins of the old which, doomed by history, cannot be saved by simple idealization.

The great bulk of women, those belonging to the labouring classes, have never enjoyed the privilege, although they paid the price and more. They have always been, not only housekeepers and breeding machines, but also beasts of burden, never toys. Thus, more than ninety per cent of the Indian manhood is not entitled to take up the paternalistic attitude towards women. They nevertheless do. That is the heritage of patriarchal culture. A palpable untruth has become a matter of current belief. Not only men tell the lie; women also believe in it. In either case, it is a matter of habit. Prejudice, fostered through ages by religion, and fortified by ignorance, makes them blind to the stark realities of daily life.

Now, the middle-class also is sinking down to the position of the masses living on manual labour. An increasingly large number of its male members find themselves unable to offer economic security to women. So, the traditional protective or paternalistic attitude towards women remains a practical proposition only for the thin upper stratum of society—for those fortunate few who mostly live on unearned income or are engaged in well-paid professions. Apart from the intrinsic injustice and immorality of this old-fashioned attitude, it is idle to defend a relation that does not exist in reality, to hold up an ideal which cannot be reached, to advise women to remain content under male protection which, to the great majority of them, is no longer available. The reality of the situation is obscured by a fiction, and this is done purposely. The unrealizable ideal of paternalism is held up with the purpose of placing the modern women in the wrong, for maintaining that there is no legitimate ground for their discontent which is ascribed to their being lured by 'false ideals borrowed from the West'.

* * *

The desire of women to stand economically on their own feet, however, is a native growth. The legitimate ground for the desire always existed, the vast bulk of women having never been really dependent on men economically. Always as now, they have shared with men extra-domestic labour; but they were never allowed any proprietory right over the produce of their labour which legally belonged to men—the lords and masters of the family. When women are compelled to perform labour of economic value, they are legitimately entitled to share the ownership with men. The demand for the economic independence of woman is not a new-fangled idea. It is a demand for the redress of a wrong done to them throughout the ages. In addition to this perennial cause for the revolt of women, affecting them as an entire social group, there are new causes. These are also native; they generate in the dissolution of the joint family and the general economic distress of the middle-class.

The historically caused and socially necessary revolt of women, therefore, is not a nuisance created by some middle-class women corrupted by Western ideas. Though they are naturally occupied immediately with their own particular problems, these women, however, give expression to the long-standing grievance of the dumb masses of their sex. The problems confronting the middle-class women particularly cannot be solved without a radical reconstruction of society. Because, the problems originate in the decay of the established social order which, for ages, treated the vast bulk of women as beasts of burden. Thus, objectively, the educated women rebelling against the ideals of Indian womanhood, are demanding a social revolution. . . .

Here is a clear statement of what the modern woman really strives for:

> The women's movement has set to it the task of removing all sex-inequality wherever it exists, so as to bring that happy day of consummation nearer. All sex-discrimination must go wherever it may exist, and as a logical consequence of that, all exploitation must cease. That is the burden of the message of the Women's conference.*

What is the happy day which has become the ideal of the modern Indian woman? Let her describe, in order to dispel the bogey of sex war:

---

* Presidential Address by Mrs Brijlal Nehru to the annual meeting of the Delhi Women's Conference, 8 Novermber 1936.

> The commonest misunderstanding is that the movement is supposed to create a rift between men and women by bringing into play a spirit of sex-rivalry, sex-competition and sex-war. It is argued that, instead of bringing about peace and harmony into an already distracted world, the movement creates new issues leading to dissensions between the two parts of humanity which are destined to live together a unitary life, and without whose cooperation the world cannot exist. To give this interpretation to the movement is to deny its objective, which is not to set woman against man, but to bring about peace and harmony and true cooperation between the two.

Who would fall foul of this objective, and yet claim to be the upholder of a noble ideal of womanhood? Perhaps the Indian apologist would contend that that exactly is the ideal of Indian womanhood. Well, the fact is that it is not. Let the testimony come from experience.

> Men and women have no doubt lived their lives together all over the world and at all time, but they have not lived together the lives of true companionship. There might have been a dead peace in their relationship, but that peace has not been the peace of life and harmony. There has been from time immemorial, a spirit of superiority and inferiority in the relation between man and woman, of exploitation of woman by man. This spirit is manifest in the customs and manners, in the rules and laws, of our country. It has vitiated the relationship of the two, and has been the cause of inhuman evolution and has retarded human progress. True peace and harmony and real companionship between man and woman can exist only when the relation rests upon equality and justice. As long as there is the slightest idea of the master and the dependent, of the superior and the inferior, in the hearts of men or in their customs and their practices and laws, the consummation of human bliss and evolution, which can be found in perfect harmony and cooperation between man and woman, cannot be achieved.*

In the Hindu family, the woman is dependent. The ideal of womanhood does not change that; it is a mere myth. Laws as well as practices are all full of the spirit of inequality and injustice.

In the last analysis, economic freedom is the basic demand. That is the only way out of the impasse created by the breakdown of an old social order. Justice as well as general social welfare demands the establishment of that freedom on the part of women. Indeed, the freedom demanded by the modern woman alone can prevent the dissolution of the family as a necessary social institution, and head off the danger of a social chaos. The modern woman does not want to create a social chaos. She had been thrown in the midst of one. She is only trying to get out of it. Let her not be handicapped by the load-stone [*sic*] of the fictitious ideal of Indian womanhood, tied around her neck.

---

* Ibid.

Notes

[1] *Young India*, 12 March 1925; *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol 26, pp. 279–80; pp 446–53. Gandhi wrote:

> There can be no two opinions about the necessity of birth control. But the only method handed down from ages is self-control or brahmacharya. . . . The union is meant not for pleasure but for bringing forth progeny. And union is a crime when the desire for progeny is absent.
>
> Artificial methods are like putting a premium upon vice. They make men and women reckless. . . . Adoption of artificial methods must result in imbecility and nervous prostration . . . if artificial methods become the order of the day nothing but moral degradation can be the result.

In his letter to Ellen Gottschalk dated 21 January 1936, Roy mentioned Margaret Sanger's interview with Gandhi during which the latter asserted that 'the alternative to contraceptive measures is for married women to desist from the enjoyment of sexual intercourse'. Roy did not note that contradicting Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore had supported Margaret Sanger and written on 30 September 1925 in *Birth Control Review* that the 'Birth Control movement is a great movement not only because it will save women from enforced and undesirable maternity, but because it will help the cause of peace by lessening the number of surplus population of a country scrambling for food and space outside its own rightful limits.'

For details, Sibnarayan Ray (ed), *Gandhi India and the World*, Melbourne, 1970, pp. 119–120.

[2] Since Nilima Devi wrote this, significant changes have taken place, especially over the past two decades. There are today not a few distinguished women in India who are outspoken in their demand for true sexual equality or in their campaign against sexual discrimination and exploitation. However, during the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, the few who tried to improve the condition of Indian women or criticized the traditional attitude and conduct towards women were mostly men of enlightened ideas like Rammohun, Vidyasagar, Lokhitwadi, Fule, young members of the Brahmo Samaj, etc. The Bengali periodical *Bamabodhini Patrika* (1863–1922), exclusively devoted to the cause of female education and improvement, and which encouraged women to contribute to its pages, was founded and run by some of the progressive male members of the Brahmo Samaj. The views of women expressed in those pages reflected in the main the views of their male mentors.

For details, Charles H. Heimsath, *Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform*, Princeton, 1964; G. Murshid, *Reluctant Debutante,* Rajshahi, 1983; Meredith Borthwick, *The Changing Role of Women in Bengal 1849–1905*, Princeton, 1984.

[3] With the enactment of the Hindu Code, the legal position of Hindu women has admittedly improved in independent India. However, in reality, the attitude and conduct of the average Hindu male towards women show but marginal and reluctant modification. Besides, the number of women who seek or receive the limited entitlements or restitutions under the Hindu Code continues to be mournfully small. A. J. Almenas-Lipowsky, *The Position of Indian Women in the Light of Legal Reform*, Wiesbaden, 1975.

[4] Drakon, a codifier of laws in ancient Athens, is remembered for the very harsh and cruel laws he gave that city. The English word draconian, meaning very harsh, cruel, is derived from his name. Subsequently, another lawgiver, Solon, reformed and liberalized the laws and laid the constitutional foundations of Athenian democracy. R. J. Bonner, *Aspects of Athenian Democracy*, Berkeley, 1933.

[5] Roy here anticipated developments in urban India which have become pronounced over the past few decades. Aspects of these developments are discussed in the following books among others: J. M. Everett, *Women and Social Change in India*, Delhi, 1979; Maria Mies, *Indian Women and Patriarchy*, New Delhi, 1980; B. R. Nanda (ed), *Indian Women from Purdah to Modernity*, New Delhi, 1976; H. B. Mehta, *Women's Emancipation in India 1813–1966*, New Delhi, 1973; Pratima Asthana, *The Women's Movement in India*, Delhi, 1974.

SNR.

Selections from
SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

I Introduction
II Reality and Appearance
III Science and Philosophy
IV New Physics
VI Substance and Causality
VIII The Mystery of Life
XI A Scientific Theory of Knowledge

Introductory editorial note

The first edition of *Science and Philosophy* (pp. v, 206) was published in 1947 by Renaissance Publishers, Calcutta, almost eleven years after Roy's release from jail. By that time he had moved 'beyond communism' (a book under that title written jointly by him and Philip Spratt was published that very year from Calcutta) to *New Humanism* (also first published in 1947). However, the first drafts of the text that formed the contents of *Science and Philosophy* were almost entirely written during his years of imprisonment, and they constituted a substantial part of his Prison Manuscripts. The drafts were, of course, edited, and their order rearranged before publication, but there were few alterations made in the original text. As Roy himself stated in the Preface to the 1947 edition, the manuscript was 'written under the restrictions of prison life', a 'major part of the manuscript was ready for publication years ago', but publication was delayed by the war. The book thus belongs, like other 'Fragments' from the Prison Manuscripts, to the period 1932–36. For an up to date exposition of the philosophy which he developed between 1946 and 1952, the reader is referred to his magnum opus, *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*. The complete text of that work was sent to me by Roy in April 1952. I was not able at that time to raise enough money to publish it in a single-volume edition. The first volume (308 pages) was published in August 1952; the second volume (330 pages) posthumously in May 1956.

It has been possible to find the first drafts of virtually all the chapters of *Science and Philosophy* in the Prison Manuscripts; they occur, not always sequentially, in volumes IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, along with other notes, observations, and essays. The evolution of this work can be traced from both the Prison Manuscripts and the letters written from jail. The very first letter (11.8.31) to Ellen Gottschalk written after his arrest mentions that, besides preparing his defence, he would 'like to make a special study of the History of Materialism and of the cultural importance of the Middle Ages'. On 9 Janurary 1932 he was sentenced to twelve years' transportation. He took the sentence stoically, and his first letter (16.2.32) from his new address (Central Prison, Bareilly) not only listed a formidable number of books on science and philosophy which he wanted to be sent to him but also mentioned his plan to write three books, one of them to be 'a popular exposition of the scientific view of nature, life and history'. In his letter of 21 May 1932, he gave the provisional table of contents of his projected book which was to be entitled 'A Scientific View of Nature, Life and History'. On 6 April 1933 he asked for 'the latest works on theoretical physics' by Eddington, Jeans, Rutherford, Pickering, and others; on 12 October, for 'the latest scientific publications' by Planck, Soddy, Haldane, Huxley, etc. From 21 April, 1934 onwards there occurs in his letters frequent mention of scientists and philosophical issues occupying his mind—Heisenberg, Bohr, Bridgeman, the 'Copenhagen School', Dirac, de Broglie, Born, Schroedinger, Russell, Whitehead, Roy W. Sellers, and, of course, repeatedly Einstein; and the theory of Uncertainty, Relativity and Unified Field Theory, Space, Time, Substance, Causality—indeed all those issues that are considered in *Science and Philosophy*. He sought and sometimes received comments and advice on his work-in-progress from his friend August Thalheimer who had been intellectually closest to him during his years in Europe and the Soviet Union. The implications of the Quantum Theory exercised him a good deal. On 18 July 1934 he wrote from Almora District Jail that he 'had written a fair amount on this point' (Indeterminacy), and now with the help of Born's mathematical Coordination of the Quantum Theory with Maxwell's Law of Electromagnetism, as well as the observational result set forth in this book (*The Atom*) of [John] Tulin, I shall be able to round up my critique of new-mysticism'. He was particularly keen 'to debunk this "New Epistemology" which is supposed to result . . . from the doctrine of Indeterminacy' (23.8.34). His problem was 'to translate pure mathematics into a plain human language', but he was sure that 'the gap between Quantum Mechanics and Classical Mechanics is mostly imaginary' (20.9.34). He hoped 'eventually to consult the Masters' (20.12.34), but in the meantime he wanted Ellen to find out from Einstein [who had known him well in Berlin] what the latter really meant by 'religious feeling . . . at the harmony of natural law' (20.1.1935). On 19.2.1935 we find him 'leisurely working up on the philosophical consequences of the Theory of Relativity. . . . The difficulty is that the Unified Field Theory still remains incomplete'. The letter of 21 June 1935 gave a chapterwise breakdown of the 'Philosophical Consequences'; some of the chapter-headings are the same as in the published book *Science and Philosophy*. On 21 July 1935, he quoted from his prison manuscripts that the 'uncertainty of Quantum phenomena would be eventually explained by the application of the physical principle of Relativity to the microcosmic world, and that Einstein's Unified Field Theory was moving in that direction of a grand synthesis of modern physical knowledge'. He kept urging Ellen to send him a copy of the *Review* of the American Physical Society carrying Einstein's latest work 'which coordinated atomic phenomena with the General Theory of Relativity', 'the latest version of the Unified Field Theory' (21.10.35).

In the prison manuscripts, we find Roy outlining his project of a book on Materialism already on sheet no. 19 of the first volume, but the work begins to take clear shape in volume III. His concentration on contemporary scientific theories and their philosophical implications becomes pronounced in the fourth volume; much of what came to be incorporated in *Science and Philosophy* would be found in his handwriting in volumes V to VIII. Much of his notes on this theme could not be included in the book; the reasons, I guess, were that publication of his newly developing ideas had a higher priority, and not enough funds were available at that time for publishing a book of much larger size. Commercial publishers were not interested; indeed, since his break with the Comintern, virtually all his books and pamphlets had to be published by his followers and admirers who were few in number and their material resources scanty.

When Roy wrote his Prison Manuscripts he was still very much a Marxist, and his preocupation with the philosophical consequences of modern science was definitely in the Marxist tradition. Marx strongly emphasized the close interdependence of theory and praxis. His revolutionary programme and political economy were inspired and sustained by a materialist–humanist philosophy of which the earliest formulations are to be found in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, the 'Theses on Feuerbach' (1845), and *The German Ideology* (1845–6) written jointly with Engels. At his death Marx left his manuscripts in a chaotic state. Engels, his lifelong friend and collaborator, survived him by thirteen years, and became the keeper of his archives, editor of several of his manuscripts, and the most authoritative interpreter and expounder of what came to be known as Marxism. It was Engels who provided the most elaborate exposition of the Marxist *Weltanschauung* in *Anti-Duehring*. He claimed that the Marxian dialectic was 'the science of the general laws of motion and development of nature, human society and thought'. Marx was primarily concerned with history and society, and with man's role in both. Engels extended the scope of their system to include nature. He advanced the principle of Marxian dialectics 'far beyond the categories of human history, in the realms of biology, physics and mathematics'. He did this most elaborately in his work *Dialectics of Nature*, edited and published posthumously by Ryazanov in 1925 (translated into English by Roy's one-time colleague Clemens Dutt). The three followers of Marx who had deeply influenced Roy were Plekhanov, Lenin, and Thalheimer; and on this and other issues they accepted Engels as their mentor. *Science and Philosophy* may thus be seen as a work in the tradition of Engels–Plekhanov–Lenin–Thalheimer.

However, though still a Marxist, Roy was gradually becoming aware that the Marxist philosophy required careful re-examination and, on several points, reformulation. Roy's own understanding of Marxism had matured during the twenties; he was familiar with the contemporary debates among the Marxists over the somewhat heretical interpretations offered by scholarly ideologues like Abram Deborin (who had edited the works of Feuerbach, and the Library of Materialists) in the periodical *Under the Banner of Marxism* between 1925 and 1929, by Georg Lukacs in *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* (1923), and by Karl Korsch in *Marxismus und Philosophie* (1923).

But although he had once crossed swords with Lenin and written a great deal of theoretical and polemical literature applying Marxism to the analysis of developments in India, China, and the West, he did not involve himself in philosophical controversies during his Comintern years. The period of forced confinement in one jail after another started him on a re-examination of the theory and practice of Marxism, and the process was to an extent quickened by his study of the revolutionary developments that had been taking place in the various sciences in the first three decades of this century. A letter written exactly four months before his release from District Jail, Dehra Dun, is quite illuminating.

> We must have the courage to admit that the last word was not said nearly a century ago, and to realize that certain points may require revision or elaboration or reformulation in the light of the advance of science, on which the fundamental principles of our philosophy rest. . . . I am almost prepared to say that Marxism is not a body of doctrines, but a system of method . . . the content of the concept of matter has been found to be very different from the traditional notion. . . . The adjective 'dialectic' does not quite serve the purpose of meeting the situation created by the undeniable revolution in the concept of substance . . . the disappearance of the distinction between mass and energy demands of philosophy a new definition of objective reality. [20.7.1936.]

Science and Philosophy was an attempt to reformulate the philosophy of materialism in response to the revolutionary developments in the natural sciences.

However, it would take him another ten years before he was able to outline a philosophy which was no longer a revision of Marxism, but stood on its own. I presume that it will be the responsibility of the editor of the next two volumes of the *Selected Works* to indicate the stages of his development from Marxism to Radical Humanism.

Science and Philosophy consisted of eleven chapters, of which I have selected here seven. I have ommitted the preface and chapters V (Space and Time), VII (The Problem of Beginning and End), IX (New Vitalism), and X (Materialism). The selected chapters have been reproduced in entirety.

SNR.

I Introduction

For the average educated man, the term philosophy has a very vague meaning, but sweeping application; it stands not only for speculative thought, but also for poetic fancy. In India, particularly, this vague, all-embracing sense is generally prevalent. Philosophy is not distinguished from religion and theology. Indeed, what is believed to be the distinctive feature of Indian philosophy is that it has not broken away from the mediaeval tradition, as modern Western philosophy did in the seventeenth century.

Philosophical doctrines based upon faith, by their very unphilosophical nature, cannot naturally be tested by the standard of scientific knowledge. As a matter of fact, such doctrines deny that the standard of scientific knowledge can be applied to them. Their test, therefore, must be logical. Faith also has its logic, and the task of the critique of religious philosophy is to lay bare the fallacy of that logic. Take, for example, the idea of God. It results from the belief that the world was created once upon a time; and no creation is possible without a creator. Physical research has exploded the doctrine of creation, and consequently rendered the idea of God, personal or impersonal, untenable. But the believer may disregard all the evidence of science and arguments of natural philosophy. We must meet him on his own ground. We must expose the fallacy of the logic of his faith.

The faith in God has a rational foundation. It results from the primitive man's search for the cause of things. God is postulated as the cause of the world. Now, if everything must have a cause, it is quite logical to ask who created God. The usual answer of religion, that God is eternal, only begs the question. The search for a final cause must lend to *regresso ad infinitum*. There is no reason why you should stop at God and call him the final cause. To do so is to abandon the notion that everything has a cause. Once it is admitted that something may be self caused, many have its cause inherent in its own being, as done by postulating God as the final cause, there cannot be any logical objection to the view that world is self caused, that it was never created, that it is eternal. By finding causes of the natural phenomena in nature itself, science progressively reinforced this logically tenable position. So, the germ for the destruction of the belief in God is embedded in its own rationalist foundation. It may disregard the evidence of science and the arguments of natural philosophy. But it cannot stand the test of its own logic, which drives it into the fatal fallacy of *regresso ad infinitum*.

The purpose of this book is not to criticize this or that type of philosophy. It is to draw the philosophical conclusion of modern scientific theories. If it is found that modern scientific research does not lead to a mystic, spiritualist view of nature, religious philosophy will be necessarily rejected. Because neo-spiritualism is regarded as a vindication of religious philosophy, although its prophets may not be inclined to go so far.

Faith in the supernatural does not permit the search for the cause of natural phenomena in nature itself. Therefore, rejection of orthodox religious ideas and theological dogmas is the condition for philosophy. The growth of the natural sciences in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries enabled modern Western philosophy to repudiate the superstitious creeds of religion, and throw off the domination of theological dogmas. The contention that modern physical research leads to a mystic–spiritualist view of the world means that, in the historic struggle against religion, science has been defeated. Idealism, in the classical form, cannot be resurrected. The neo-spiritualists, therefore, do not defend classical Idealism. They hold a mystic view: nature is inscrutable; it is impossible to know what the physical world really is; the nature of reality is beyond our ability to know. All this means that modern physical research compels a return to the faith in the supernatural. Even classical Idealism would not go so far. Because it is based upon rationalism, having grown out of the revolt against religious superstitions and theological dogmas. To perform its function, philosophy must break away from religion, start from the reality of the physical Universe, and consequently head towards Materialism. Therefore, a mystic view of the world is negation of philosophy. It liquidates philosophy and resurrects faith.

If scientific research really compels us to take a mystic view of the world, then, philosophy must revert to its old occupation—to speculate about the hypothesis of a spiritual reality behind material appearances, about the postulate of a World Soul and its relation with individual souls, and such other problems that can never be solved by man, himself limited by his material being. The ideal of human existence would, then, again become the accomplishment of an impossibility—realization of the Infinite by the finite. If it is true that science has found it impossible to explain the phenomena of nature without assuming unknowable causes, then philosophy must relapse into the morass of idle speculation about problems that are insoluble by their very nature. The belief in supernatural forces would have to be revived. Religion would be restored to its old place of supreme authority. To speculate about the nature of God as the embodiment of the supernatural would be the highest intellectual occupation. But, if, on the contrary, it is found that a neo-spiritualism does not necessarily result from modern scientific research, then it must be admitted that the historic battle between religion and science has ended in a victory of science. The historic battle between religion and science, superstition and reason, faith and knowledge will still have to be fought in those countries where it has not yet been fought.

The fundamental problem of philosophy is to define philosophy. It can be defined as the theory of life. We may formulate the definition in another manner: the function of philosophy is to solve the riddle of the Universe. Philosophy is the theory of life, because it was born of the efforts of man to explain nature and to understand his own being in relation to its surroundings; to solve the actual problems of life in the light of past experience, so that the solution will give him an encouraging glimpse into the future. Those efforts began as soon as man learned to think. In course of time, exigencies of his physical being brought him face to face with the necessity of finding causes of the phenomena of nature so as to understand them and control them gradually. Life itself is an outcome of the cosmic evolution. Therefore, a comprehensive theory of life, a logical explanation of the becoming of man, his present being and future perspective can be formulated only in the light of a sufficiently clear understanding of the entire cosmic scheme. A comprehensive philosophy embracing all the aspects of nature and life must, therefore, be based upon a cosmology.

Philosophy is older than religion. It is as old as *Homo sapiens*. In the process of the intellectual evolution of man, reason appears earlier than faith. Instinct is the primitive form of reason; at a later stage of intellectual evolution, it still represents the automatic, physiological functioning of reason, which itself is a biological property of higher organisms. In a rudimentary form, it can be traced even in higher animals.

Our knowledge of animal psychology is still very inadequate. Nevertheless, sufficient data have been collected to indicate that faith does not enter into the mental make-up of higher animals, in whom the presence of intelligence and emotion is clearly discernible. Going a step further in the process of organic evolution, we find absence of faith in the primitive human being. Contrary to the prevalent notion, belief in God and soul is not inherent in human consciousness. It is not human nature to believe in the supernatural. Anthropological investigations have definitely repudiated that venerable dictum. Among primitive races, the notions of God and soul are absent. The earliest form of religion—animism—is preceded by the belief in magical power; and magic does not represent belief in the supernatural. It is not miracle. The faith in magic is the most primitive form of determinism—the crudest conception of nature as an order in which there are laws—effects following causes. The rationalist instinct, expressed in the crude form of determinism called magic, eventually led man to search for the cause of natural phenomena. The earlier stages of spiritual development are marked with the conviction that everything must have a cause. This conviction is the mother of philosophy as well as of science.

The development of modern science made man progressively acquainted with the laws of nature. Philosophy, consequently, found itself in the position to conceive and explain the universe as a self-caused, self-contained order. It is no longer necessary to assume supernatural forces for the purpose of explaining the order of nature—for offering a plausible solution of the riddle of the Universe.

Religion is an intellectual and moral need so long as it serves a philosophical purpose. The philosophical value of religion is in its rationalist core. Faith in the supernatural is characteristic of a pathological stage of intellectual development. As soon as conditions conducive to normal development are available to human intelligence, it outgrows the pathological state of faith. The defeat of religion by science is a logical outcome of the rationalist core of religion. To survive the defeat, or drag on a losing battle, religion must discard its rationalist core. That is to say, after the rise of modern science, all philosophical reason for the existence of religion disappears. Once man has overcome the circumstantial disadvantages that compelled him to believe in the supernatural, he is bound to outgrow the religious mode of thought. If in one period of man's spiritual development the religious mode of thought is an intellectual and moral need, because it gives a pathological expression to his instinctive rationality, in a subsequent stage the disappearance of that mode of thought is equally necessary.

Religion is bound to be liquidated by science, because scientific knowledge enables mankind to answer questions, confronted by which in its childhood, it was compelled to assume supernatural forces or agencies. If the assumption really answered the questions, then religion would have precluded the rise of science. But religion did not explain natural phenomena. It simply created a new set of problems, which overshadowed the original problems of existence. Once the explanation of natural phenomena was conveniently found in the assumption of supernatural forces, the attention of man was naturally preoccupied with the nature and behaviour of those imaginary beings. The original problems of real existence were not explained; they were simply pushed aside; and, consequently, their solution became impossible. But the problems remained. They are problems of human existence. Religion not only did not solve them, but focusing human attention on imaginary questions about the nature of God, soul, etc., obstructed their solution for a long time.

The rise of modern science represents reassertion of the fundamental trait of human nature—the spirit of enquiry. Human existence implies action. Man is not a passive observer of nature.. His very being brings him in contact with his physical environments, compels him to act, and arouses in him the desire to acquire knowledge of them—makes him alive to the necessity of such knowledge. Indeed, the elementary knowledge of his physical surroundings is automatically acquired as of biological necessity. So, the development of science is determined by the laws of human evolution. The verdict of science must, therefore, be accepted as binding upon philosophy. Religion, in so far as it is a crude form of philosophy, must also bow before the verdict of science.

The spiritual progress of mankind is the result of efforts to answer the questions: why? and how? It is generally held that science is occupied with the latter, while the former is the share of philosophy. If the first question is meant to be why the world is, then, it cannot be a question of philosophy. Because, so formulated, the question calls for the search after the final cause, the very notion of which is logically fallacious. The notion of final cause presupposes belief in determinism. If everything must have a cause, the causal chain must be endless. It cannot break off at a point, however, distant. Therefore, the notion of final cause is precluded by the logic of the notion itself. It is self-contradictory. Occupying itself with the question why, philosophy takes on a religious character, because enquiry into a logically fallacious problem cannot be undertaken except on the basis of faith, which anticipates the result of enquiry. There are only two alternative answers to the question Why? The world is, because it is created and, the world is, because it is. Both the answers are incomplete. To be complete, the one requires the postulation of a creator; and then it ceases to be a conclusive answer. If the question Why? is logically valid as regards the world, it is equally applicable to the creator of the world. And the slippery road to *regresso ad infinitum* is opened before the unwary inquirer. The complete form of the other answer would be: The world is because it is eternal. This answer requires corroboration, which is provided by science. The doctrine of creation can find absolutely no ground in science. The eternalness of the world is further proved by the fact, discovered by science, that its being and becoming are determined by laws inherent in itself. The first answer, in contrast, besides being logically fallacious, can never be verified. Therefore, it cannot be the answer of philosophy.

It is maintained that science cannot answer the question Why? If science cannot answer it, that is because the question is illogical as well as incomplete; because it is meaningless. An elementary condition for any fruitful scientific enquiry is to insist that the questions should be sensible. For, the nature and the form of the question often limit the freedom of enquiry and predetermine the character of the answer. You cannot expect an answer to the question Why? unless you say, why what? The question is incomplete because it leaves the nature of the enquiry vague. But stated in a formally and linguistically complete form, it can be answered by science, and alone by science. We can understand why the world is so as it is, only in the light of the knowledge of how things composing the world happen. The laws of becoming reveal the nature of being. There is no other way to an understanding of the nature of being. The fundamental problem of philosophy, that is the riddle of the Universe, thus can be solved only with the aid of scientific knowledge.

The question why is illogical, because by implication it admits non-existence as an alternative possibility. If you ask why the world exists, you mean that it might not be necessary for it to exist. We are required to conceive non-existence as some thing real, at least hypothetically. But non-existence cannot be conceived by existing minds. It is an entirely different matter to ask why the world is so. The implication of the question thus formulated is that it might be otherwise. The alternative possibility, tacitly admitted, is not non-existence, but some other form of existence. In this form, the question can be, and is, answered by science, which shows that the world is so as it is in consequence of laws inherent in itself; that the laws of its own being do not permit it to be otherwise. It is explained why the world is as it is, but the possibility of other forms of existence is not excluded. If the laws of its being were different, the world might have been different.

Although the possibility of its being otherwise is not excluded, the question whether general laws of nature could be different is meaningless, as Henri Poincare shows. Because it would always be possible to refer natural laws, today considered to be fundamental, to more general laws (*Derniers passes*). The laws of nature are not independent of the physical being that they govern. Nowhere are they found to exist by themselves. Their existence is inseparable from the physical being. In a sense, they are properties of the physical being, and are expressed through its medium. Their forms are determined by the medium of their expression. Modern physical research has discovered that the varying states of physical being are associated with specific forms of natural laws. They can be traced back, though it is not yet done fully, to one or more physical states also analysable to an initial general state; and what is regarded today as the 'initial simple condition' may tomorrow be found to be a complex combination of more elementary units. The causal relation between the natural laws and physical being is really mutual. Thus, the causal chain of the cosmic process need not be traced outside the world—to a metaphysical final cause.

The question whether the world could be otherwise has only a momentary meaning, and it is answered affirmatively by the world itself. Every moment there is a different world; and in the same moment, there is a multiplicity of worlds. Every one of these innumerable, not merely possible, but actual, worlds has a specific system of natural laws which govern its being and becoming. Rationalist theology maintains that God did not create the world; it is an automatic mechanism; God's function is to decide which of the innumerable possible worlds should be the actual world. The multiplicity of worlds being not a mere metaphysical possibility, but an actuality, in space as well as in time, God is no longer required even to perform the selection function.

With the disappearance of the notion of creation, disappears one of the oldest problems of philosophy, namely, did the world originate by chance or of necessity? The physical world being without a beginning, as science shows, the question about its origin becomes irrelevant. If the question how it originated is irrelevant, the question why it exists is even more so. The world exists because it is eternal. Indeed, the question,, why the world exists, is prima facie absurd.

To become the point of departure for a fruitful philosophical investigation, the question must be stated in an intelligent, relevant from—why the world is so? Philosophy can answer this question only in the light of scientific knowledge. The knowledge of how things happen in it, enables us to explain why the world is as it is.The same knowledge also enables us to regard such traditional philosophical concepts as eternity, infinity, immortality, in a new light. Modern scientific research has put in these venerable concepts contents of concrete reality. It is remarkable that, while eliminating the necessity of the belief in God, modern scientific research brings within human comprehension notions that were traditionally associated with a supernatural spiritual being.

II Reality and Appearance

The epistemological significance of the recent achievements of physics as well as biology (including psychology) largely contributes to the solution of the old problem of perception. Philosophy has always tried to answer the question: How is knowledge possible? Even after experience had been generally accepted as the means to all knowledge, epistemology was confused and vitiated by the distinction between appearance and reality. The doctrine that reality is metaphysical sets a limit to knowledge. This doctrine eventually culminated in the Kantian unknown and unknowable thing-in-itself. The contention was that we could acquire knowledge only of the world of phenomena; the world of reality is beyond the reach of our cognitive faculty. In the light of relativity physics, the distinction between reality and appearance disappears. Consequently, a more promising approach to the baffling problem of perception is discovered. Of course an actual solution of the problem must be offered by biology. The physical principle of relativity provides the general philosophical guidance to the enquiry which, as it will be shown in a subsequent chapter, has produced results more satisfactory than ever before.

The solution of the problem of perception, in its turn, dispels all doubt about the objective validity of knowledge acquired through experience. This fundamental achievement in the realm of epistemology guarantees scientific philosophy against any idealist deviation. By scientific philosophy I mean a theory of the Universe not based on speculation, but on a progressively exact knowledge of nature. Even positivism is rendered untenable. In short, epistemologically, the philosophical outcome of the twentieth century science is corroboration of Materialism. It bears out the materialist theory of cognition.

Before proceeding, I shall quote the opinion of Professor Hans Reichenbach of the University of Berlin, who apparently takes up a neutral attitude in this connection. In a highly instructive and interesting work, Professor Reichenbach writes:

> Philosophy has always distinguished the two fundamental attitudes of Empiricism and Idealism. The natural science of today has given the victory of neither of these points of view. The fundamental idea of Empiricism, that only experience can decide on the validity of natural laws, is retained with all emphasis; but the principle of idealism, that only the combining of observed facts with laws created by thought constitutes science, is equally fundamental for the modern knowledge of nature. The constant application of the

> inductive principle expresses the empirical tendency of modern science. The belief in the unlimited correctness of induction is the essence of the empirical way of thinking. Natural science is far from attributing to this universal validity of the laws of nature any mysterious basis in metaphysical necessity. Nowhere is the anti-metaphysical attitude of modern natural science so obvious as in this conception of the problem of validity. We may also define it as the removal of the theistic element from nature. The metaphysical concepts of time and space, of substance, force and law, all of them of unmistakably anthropomorphic origin, today mean but a pictorial appendage unrelated to the experiences on which physical knowledge is really based. Only these experiences and their integration in a prophetic mathematical theory form the content of modern natural research. Perhaps there has been no greater revolution in the history of mankind than this gradual transition from the nature, full of gods, of primitive peoples, through the metaphysical nature of the philosophers, to the dispassionate nature of physics today in which there are only facts and conceptual relations between them. [*Atom and Cosmos.*]

Science is not all fact, nor is it the product of pure thought, that is, speculation. As Einstein says, 'The object of all science is to coordinate our experiences and bring them into a logical system.' Science thus stands on two legs, so to say: experience, that is, observational data, and their coordination into general laws. The former is derived from the 'external world', while the latter is the contribution of the scientist. Unless the mind of the scientist, equipped with previously acquired knowledge, worked up the raw material of observed facts, there could be no new scientific theories. The previously acquired knowledge was derived from experience, and the new theories create the condition for further advance of our knowledge. Scientific theories are not spun out of the brain of the scientist. He indispensably needs the raw material to work up, with the aid of his skill. In order to coordinate experiences into a logical system, he must have experiences to begin with.

Thus far it is clear enough. But here arises the question: experience of what? If the answer is that it is the experience of objects existing outside the consciousness of the knowing subject, then, philosophy becomes straightforward materialism, which by no means excludes the subjective element of knowledge. Is this the answer of modern science? We shall see.

Experience presupposes a conscious being, differentiated from the rest of the world; but the conscious being itself grows out of the background of physical nature, and, while experiencing the rest of nature, remains a part of nature. As a matter of fact, 'external world' is a misleading term. Because we are all integral parts of the world of our experience. Our bodies, our organs of perception, the entire cognitive apparatus, which are prerequisites for knowledge, are themselves all parts of the world we experience. We do not watch the world as outsiders. Our ego, our mind, our intelligence, our thought—all these are inseparably interwoven with the so-called external world. These subjective constituents of knowledge are parts of the whole complex of the objective nature.

The empiricist–idealist synthesis, spoken of by Professor Reichenbach, means that knowledge is the product of experiences coordinated into a logical system with the aid of conventions and methods invented by the mind of the scientist. This exactly is the materialist theory of knowledge. Empiricism, which would differentiate itself from materialism, could never serve the purpose of scientific research. For, the point of departure of all scientific investigation is the recognition of the physical existence of objects. Scientific research becomes meaningless when physical reality of nature is denied. There can be no experience when there is nothing to experience. Inference and induction are parts of experience. They are essential for framing scientific theories. If it is maintained that one cannot claim to have the experience of heavenly bodies, unless he has actually visited them physically, no astronomical theory would be possible. According to 'pure' empiricism, optical experience is not a valid source of knowledge. What is seen through the telescope is not a distant star, but simply an image on the retina of the astronomer's eye, caused by light coming from the star. Astronomical theories are all inferential; the only way to the discoveries of the laws of nature is induction—to formulate general principles on the basis of the experience of a sufficiently large number of particular events.

Inference and induction are methods of thought. They represent the subjective contribution of the scientist to the process of cognition. The raw material of experience must be cast in the moulds of concepts to become the finished product called the knowledge of nature. But these moulds are not a priori categories. They are themselves made up of previous experiences, and consequently change under the impact of new experience. The revolutionary significance, in the epistemological sense, of the twentieth century physics is that it has acquired a body of experience which cannot be fitted into the moulds of old concepts. New conceptual moulds must be created to suit the new experience. It is thus once again proved that thought is determined by being. That is the cardinal principle of materialist epistemology, which nevertheless admits that ideas, once they are formed, have a relatively objective validity, and are indispensable factors in the process of acquiring more and greater knowledge.

This point has been stressed, from the other side, by eminent biologists like Haldane and Huxley. Haldane is of the opinion that a living organism cannot be correctly studied as an object isolated from inanimate nature; that it must be regarded as inseparably interconnected with its environment. The organism, together with its environment, constitutes one single unit. He holds: 'The conception of life embraces the environment of an organism as well as what is within its body.' Huxley is even more explicit. He writes:

> The fact that man, a portion of the general stuff of which the Universe is made, can think and feel, aspire and plan, is itself full of meaning, but the precise way in which man is made, his physical construction, the kinds of feelings he has, the ways in which he thinks, the things he thinks about, everything which gives his existence form and precision—all this can only be properly understood in relation to his environments. For, he and his environments make one interlocking whole.

Physics, from one end, and biology, from the other, have converged on a plane where the term 'external world' has lost all meaning. In the light of that great discovery of modern science, the artificial distinction between appearance and reality must disappear.

Now we shall turn to the question: experience of what? Do we experience the reality or merely the appearance? In view of what has already been said, this question no longer arises. Yet, the philosophical problem, which results from the discoveries of modern physics, is epistemological. Therefore, the question must be examined more closely, on its apparent merit.

The scientists, who deduce a neo-spiritualist view of the world from the discoveries of twentieth-century physics, do not deny that experience is the source of knowledge. But they maintain that the object of our experience is not the external world; that it is our own sensation, and we have no means to ascertain how far our sensations correspond with the objects by which they are produced. In other words, according to them, we experience the world as it appears to us; the reality is never accessible to our cognitive faculty.

In support of this view, it is pointed out that the familiar world of experiences—of colour, sound, taste, touch, smell—is not the world of physics. The world, studied and described by physics, is composed of abstract concepts. It does not know anything about the 'secondary qualities' which affect our senses. Hence it is concluded that the phenomena we experience have no objective being. They are products of our perception, and as such are only inherent in consciousness. If the direct content of experience, in other words, the categories of consciousness, are accorded physical reality, then the world of physics indeed becomes a background of mere metaphysical concepts, illusive shadows.

As a matter of fact, it is maintained by the neo-spiritualist interpreters of the modern physical theories that the object of the investigations of contemporary theoretical physics is a metaphysical something unknowable. That is nothing less than liquidating physics. It is going even farther than the Kantian position. The neo-spiritualists would not concede physical reality even to the 'thing-in-itself'. They say that modern physics has not only got rid of the concepts of substance and causality, but has reduced the world to a bunch of mathematical formulas. In other words, there is no physical background to the phenomenal world of our experience which exists only in our consciousness. What we experience does not exist for physics; that is to say, it is physically unreal. The world of physics is a mathematical construction. The world of noumenon as well as phenomena has no objective reality. Both are projections of our consciousness. Consciousness is the sole reality. So, the question of knowledge does not arise. Knowledge is not possible. Has science, after several hundred years of ambitious progress, reduced its votaries to this pitiable state?

In order to find out for ourselves what solution modern science offers for the problem by abolishing the arbitrary distinction between appearance and reality, we shall have to look at the world of new physics. And in order to see the picture from a correct perspective, it will be necessary to be guided by the fundamental principles of science and philosophy and to have a clear idea about the relation between the two.

III Science and Philosophy

Undoubtedly, modern scientific theories have profound philosophical significance; it is to render the old division of labour between science and philosophy untenable. Science is stepping over the old boundary line. Digging deeper and deeper into the secrets of nature, science has come up against problems, the solution of which was previously left to philosophy. Scientific enquiry has pushed into what is traditionally regarded as the 'metaphysical' realm. But there is absolutely no evidence in support of the contention that the latest discoveries of physics negate the philosophical implications of the development of science during the last hundred and fifty years.

Philosophical speculations of individual scientists, when critically examined, are not borne out by the theories of modern science. The decisive factor is not the personal opinion of any scientist, but the logical implication of theories resulting from scientific research in general. The total body of repeatedly verified facts, collected through observations and experiments, is the basis of legitimate philosophical deductions.

One of the essential features of scientific enquiry is disregard for authority. Philosophical views of scientists must be set aside as personal predilections, resulting from their cultural background, when they run counter to the general trend of scientific research. Macdougall is, so to say, the last of the Mohicans of orthodox psychology. Yet, in his famous book *Modern Materialism and Emergent Evolution*, he writes: 'A Newton, a Pupin, a Lodge, may tell us impressively of his religious and moral convictions, but these convictions are not the conclusions to which he is led by his physical research.'

Leibniz complained that Newton had robbed God of all his attributes and undermined the foundation of religion. Yet, Newton himself was a profoundly religious man, steeped in theological prejudices. In his old age, he composed some very silly theological treatises. Differentiating between the philosophical significance of scientific knowledge and opinions of individual scientists, Professor Hyman Levy writes:

> It has taken several centuries for the scientific movement to be emancipated from just these cramping human assumptions. The writings of many scientists show, alas, that the emancipation has not yet been completed. But no individual can be the spokesman of a movement. Each is a mirror that reflects, however, imperfectly, the movement of which he is a part, but the image is coloured and distorted by his own history, from which he cannot disentangle himself. The movement transcends the man. He imposes his private and

> personal prejudices upon it at the risk of his own confusion. Only a genius can be greater than the movement, and such a genius is a rare event. [*The Universe of Science.*]

The philosophical significance of modern science is that it is disputing the claim of philosophy to an autonomous existence. The problems of philosophy—cosmological, ontological, epistemological—can all be progressively solved only in the light of scientific knowledge. That light burns brighter today than ever before. In his book *Atom and Cosmos*, quoted above, Professor Hans Reichenbach writes:

> Perhaps the characteristic trait of modern methods of physical research is nowhere so clearly expressed as in the trend from the philosophical to the physical: the physicist has become a philosopher, because, in developing his theories, he came to barriers which had to be broken open before new and unknown land could be conquered.

The function of philosophy is to explain existence as a whole. An explanation of existence requires knowledge of existence. Knowledge about the different phases of existence is gathered by the various branches of science. The function of philosophy is to coordinate the entire body of scientific knowledge into a comprehensive theory of nature and life. The function of science is to describe; that of philosophy is to explain. Therefore philosophy is called the science of sciences.

But even today, there are philosophers who claim that an omelette can be made without eggs; that the function of philosophy is not to work out the materials supplied by scientific research into a theory of nature and life, but to lay down the patterns for scientific knowledge. Whitehead is one of them. In the preface to his book *Science and the Modern World*, he writes:

> Philosophy, in one of its functions, is the critic of cosmologies. It is its function to harmonize, refashion and justify divergent intuitions as to the nature of things. It has to insist on the scrutiny of the ultimate ideas, and on the retention of the whole of the evidence in shaping our cosmological scheme. If my view of the function of philosophy is correct, it is the most effective of all intellectual pursuits. It builds cathedrals before the workmen have moved a stone, and it destroys them before the elements have worn down their arches. It is the architect of the buildings of the spirit, and it is also their solvent,. And the spiritual precedes the material.

Modern scientific theories challenge these pretensions of philosophy. On the other hand, they may be woven into the patterns produced by the pretensions of the philosopher. But their real philosophical significance may be entirely different. That significance should not be allowed to be confused by the prejudices and predilections of individual scientists.

When physics attacks the 'metaphysical' realm, it does not land itself into mysticism. On the contrary, brought under the jurisdiction of physics, metaphysical categories cease to be mysterious. Of course, in the attack upon metaphysical problems, the old weapons of physical research are not adequate. Physics today deals with categories which defy direct experience. Even the finest instruments of observation are of no avail. Mathematics is the main instrument of theoretical physics. But mathematical symbols represent physical entities; in any case, entities which exist outside the mind of the scientist. Otherwise, results obtained through highly abstract mathematical reasoning could not be verified by the observable facts of nature. Mathematical equations are not empty conventions. They describe relations between physical events.

The categories of modern physics are 'metaphysical', in the sense that they are beyond the reach of direct physical observation. But it is long since metaphysics has outgrown its original literal Greek meaning. Natural sciences pushed the boundary between the physical and the metaphysical farther and farther at the expense of the latter. Every instrument of observation, which extended the reach of the physical organs of sense, meant an encroachment upon the metaphysical realm. Today, the boundary-line between the physical and the metaphysical can be retained only as a logical formality.

The metaphysical realm used to be marked off from the world of experience by the distinction between reality and appearance. New physics abolishes that distinction. The world of physics is metaphysical, in the sense that entities composing it cannot be directly experienced. But they are no longer regarded as a priori categories. The metaphysical foundation of new physics is a posteriori deductions. Its physical reality has been experimentally established. This fundamental achievement of new physics disposes of the orthodox doctrine that metaphysical concepts are constructions of pure logic; that metaphysical propositions are analytical, they cannot be empirically proved; that metaphysical knowledge has no empirical validity.

Everything subject to physical observation, by our sense organs, must exceed a certain minimum dimension. There is no reason to suppose that, on the limit of direct physical observation, objects undergo a qualitative change. Yet, except on this dogmatic supposition, it cannot be maintained that 'metaphysical' entities are essentially different from the things of the world of experience. Dualism results from the supposition that the 'metaphysical' entities are essentially different from the things of the world of experience, and dualism vitiates philosophy.

Philosophy has always disliked dualism, because of its essentially theological implications. Modern scientific philosophy is decidedly opposed to any dualist doctrine. Dualism has haunted modern philosophy ever since the day of its founder. Descartes freed philosophy from theology, but placed it under the hegemony of the mind, which he conceived as an immaterial substance. The antithetical concepts of mind and matter, essentially different, could not be reconciled by speculative thought. The development of natural sciences brought the reconciliation within reach. Modern psychology, aided by physiology, began to unravel the mysteries of the mind. The old static conception of matter still stood on the way to the final solution. There appeared to be an unbridgeable gulf between the external world of ponderable matter and the world of mind. With its dynamic conception of matter, new physics has successfully taken the last hurdle.

Having abolished dualism ontologically (between the physical and the metaphysical) as well as epistemologically (between matter and mind), new physics has debunked metaphysics. An a posteriori system of metaphysics, if the term is still to be retained, which remains as an integral part of scientific philosophy, offers no ground for mysticism.

By its very nature, science can never go mystic. Its function is to acquire knowledge. Science is not omniscient. But it stands firmly by the claim to know. Mysticism results from ignorance. It makes a virtue of ignorance. It represents a surrender of the claim to know. It doubts the possibility of knowing. In reality, mysticism implies an admission of defeat. The hackneyed expression—'inscrutable nature'—now finding favour, curiously enough, even with some scientists, implies an admission of defeat. They, however, use it rather in the poetic than scientific sense. The traditional idea was that the secrets of nature could not be penetrated; no use making further efforts; let us give it up. To maintain that modern science, and physics, of all things, has any reason to be in such a defeatist mood, is to betray a deplorable ignorance of the glorious history of science; of the triumphant march of scientific knowledge during the last three hundred years.

Bertrand Russell writes: 'Science has two purposes. On the one hand, there is a desire to know as much as possible of the facts in the region concerned; on the other hand, there is the attempt to embrace all the known facts in the smallest possible number of general laws [*Analysis of Matter*]'. These purposes are obviously irreconcilable with any brand of mysticism—metaphysical, logical or out-and-out spiritualist. New physics has not learned all the facts concerning the region of its research. It knows there is much more to learn; and it proposes to push ahead with the purpose. It knows no mysticism which rests content with marvelling at the unknowable.

The other purpose, with which Russell credits science, not only makes it the helpmate of philosophy, but inspires it to invade the realm of metaphysics, if the old mother is either too proud or too conservative to learn from the experiences of her enterprising daughter. General laws of science have philosophical validity. Only in their revealing light can the problems of philosophy be solved. Laws of science represent knowledge of nature. Knowledge of nature enables us to tackle more successfully the problems of existence—of life, life being a part of nature. As an epistemological sceptic. Russell, of course, does not grant ontological validity to the laws of science. In his opinion, they are mental constructions, and are only logically true. That, however, is a different question, which cannot be treated here. The point, however, is that Russell is also of the opinion that, by its very nature, science gradually invades the preserves of philosophy, and experience becomes the infallible key for the solution of all philosophical problems. When the boundary-line between science and philosophy thus disappears, no room is left for mysticism. New physics represents a great advance towards a grand synthesis of human knowledge.

Thomas Huxley's famous dictum that 'science is organized common sense' has lately fallen into disrepute But despite all Positivist sophistry, and epistemological sophistications, Huxley's definition of science still holds good, generally. By common sense Huxley meant instinctive recognition of the reality of the physical world. That recognition results from the primitive reaction of an organism to its surroundings. The philosophical import of Huxley's dictum is to lay stress upon the ontological basis of scientific knowledge. In these days of fantastic epistemological extravagances, which all but deny science any ontological validity, a little moderating influence of old-fashioned commonsense may keep the balance in philosophical discussions.

It is useful to remember that awareness precedes knowledge, and awareness is a mechanical organic reaction. One must be aware of a certain object before he begins asking questions about it; and in course of the enquiry, thus initiated, he progressively acquires exact knowledge about the construction of a thing, about its properties, and its relations with other things. Primitive awareness, however, does not directly lead to accurate knowledge and intelligent judgement. A minimum cultural progress and technological equipment are prerequisites for the process. In the absence of these, there is speculation instead of enquiry and the result is mystification, not knowledge. Thus, crude common sense, that is, the instinctive belief that when we see a thing we do see a thing, is likely to give rise to all sorts of absurd notions. But 'organized common sense' is a different thing. It is the healthy, primitive, ontological sense, plus reason.

While defining science as organized common sense, Huxley declared:

> The vast results obtained by science are won by no mystical faculties, by no mental processes other than those which are practised by every one of us in the humblest and meanest affairs of life. The man of science simply uses with scrupulous exactness the methods which we all, habitually and at every moment, use carelessly.

This makes the meaning of the term 'organized common sense' clear and precise.

Scientific knowledge is the result of observation, experiment, reflection, selection, and coordination. Mind's function in the process is obvious, and is not minimized in the least. Rationalist rigour and a high level of intelligence are necessary to guarantee 'scrupulous exactness' in the process. But the primacy of the object of knowledge is emphasized.

Common sense distrusts strangeness. It is not easily taken in by mysteries and miracles. It demands explanation of phenomena that do not fit into the given order of things. It is primitive belief in causality. Common sense takes it for granted whenever things happen in the usual course; but it demands an explanation whenever an usual thing does not happen, or something unusual happens. Savage ideology is strictly deterministic. Magic, animism, primitive religion—all spring from the instinctive belief that everything must have a cause. The belief in causality is so deeply woven in the texture of consciousness, because the process of organic evolution is itself determined. Whatever may be the genesis of common sense, it represents the unerring sense of physical existence, the rudimentary ontological sense, which is the condition sine qua non for all knowledge, acquired progressively through an endless process of discrimination, differentiation, criticism, selection, penetration, and refinement.

Einstein testifies that new physics has not abandoned the old-fashioned commonsense methods. He says that 'the object of all sciences is to coordinate our experiences and bring them into a logical system'. This may appear like reducing science to intellectual gymnastics, as Dirac, for example, tends to do. But a second reading of the short passage dispels the first wrong impression. Experience is placed in the centre. Experience supplies the raw material. The mathematical formulas of new physics could not be spun mystically out of mental processes, unless experience supplied the raw material. As the object of science is to coordinate experiences into a logical system, obviously, experience is the basis of scientific knowledge. To the sophisticated question: experience of what? Einstein's answer is characteristically direct and disconcertingly unmistakable. He believes in old-fashioned common sense. He says that no scientist really believes himself when he talks sceptically about the physical reality of the external world. One cannot doubt physical reality and be a physicist at the same time. Why should an astronomer spend his life gazing at distant stars through high-power telescopes, if he did not believe that the stars really existed. If he were honestly convinced that they were projections of his own mind, or mere mathematical constructions, why should he bother with the instruments of physical observation and measurement? Introspection would give him the same result. But no astronomer has yet left his observatory—not even Eddington or Jeans, nor has any physicist deserted the laboratory.

The positivist may indulgently smile at the naïve realism of the *enfant terrible* of the modern world of science. But scientists cannot disregard the basic fact of existence, that awareness precedes knowledge; and scientific investigation must place ontology before epistemology.

The new physics follows the classical scientific method which, being essentially guided by sound common sense, has no patience for mysteries and miracles. All sorts of strange facts may be discovered when the investigation is pushed into hitherto unknown regions. As soon as something strange turns up, an explanation is demanded. The enquiry goes on untiringly until all the discovered facts, old and new, are coordinated into a logical system. Meanwhile, the strange fellows naturally arouse curiosity, attract general attention, and provoke speculation which may tend to step over the limits of scientific method. But, for science, they represent only a problem to be solved, which can be solved and will be solved.

Discovery of new facts is the condition for greater knowledge. And when the facts are really of a new order, old theories require amending. The discoveries of new physics, instead of encouraging mysticism, have just the opposite philosophical implication. The following, written by the American philosopher Charles Pierce well ahead of time, has a much greater bearing upon the present state of our physical knowledge than all the contemporary mystic–metaphysical speculations:

> Experience teaches by means of a series of surprises. It is through the conflict of our explanations with what happens in reality that we learn. Even in scientific experiments, nothing is learned from an experiment which only confirms a prior hypothesis: it is the surprise of a new disclosure that counts. This element of surprise, moreover, indicates interaction between the self and the world, and so disproves any subjective idealism.

There is still another stratagem for going around the difficulty of the external world, without which no physics is possible. But it only spoils the case of subjective idealism. Professor Hermann Weyl writes: 'Physics is not at all concerned with the material contents of reality; what forms the subject of its knowledge is a simply formal view or statement of it [*Space, Time and Matter*].' This formalist attitude towards the external world does not solve the question of existence: nor can the question be suppressed by simply ignoring it. But the modest scientist refuses to philosophize. He still desires to maintain the division of labour. He says: I have performed my function—described reality; now let the philosopher do whatever he pleases with it. Only, the scientist's description is so nearly complete as leaves philosophy little freedom. The explanation is compelled. Science needs no longer be respectful about the 'thing-in-itself', which philosophy placed beyond its reach. When the description tells all about the properties, functions, and relations of reality, it reveals the nature of reality. In any case, the explanation of the nature of reality must be done in the light of the description of the forms of reality, whether it is done by the scientist or left to the philosopher. If the philosopher won't see the light and stupidly persist groping in the dark, the scientist must do his own philosophizing. It is all but a matter of formality. Scientists' description has become the explanation.

What Weyl really means is that physics can describe only the process of becoming; being is a metaphysical conception, which need not be postulated for the purpose of physics. But the metaphysical concept of being can be really eliminated only by suppressing the dualist notion of being and becoming. That requires a dynamic conception of matter. The new physics provides that. It has discovered that the something which distinguishes the world from nothing is being and becoming at the same time. Absolute being can be conceived only in abstraction. Becoming is the essence of being. The stuff of the world is not static, but dynamic. It is never in an inert state. Wherever it is, it is in the state of becoming. In the absence of becoming, there is nothing; being becomes real in becoming. But, on the other hand, absolute being, that is, being abstracted from becoming, is conceivable logically, whereas becoming logically presupposes being. It can take place only on the background of being.

Even Jeans bears out Einstein's assertion that physicists do not believe themselves when they appear to make a mystery of the physical world. Having stated the position of new physics in the words of Heisenberg, he goes on to admit: 'This is not meant in any way to suggest that an objective nature does not exist, but merely that it is at present beyond our purview [*The Background of Science*].' The dispute is not about the reality of the external world, but about the nature of the external world. In the place of the old common sense view, we are now given a variety of sceptical, non-committal, semi-idealistic theories.

Descartes said: 'Give me matter and motion, and I will construct the world.' Eddington now improves upon him and says: 'Give me a world—a world in which there are relations—and I will construct matter and motion [*Space, Time and Gravitation*].' Presumably, he means to say that matter and motion are creations of the scientist's mind. But he must have 'relations; and relations presuppose things related. They may not be as coarse as the 'solid lumps of reality' of classical physics. But there must be something to be related. Then, you still need a world, given to you, that is, objectively existing. What Eddington really means, then, is that new physics has analysed the physical world to constituents finer than those of classical physics. Matter and motion remain, but not as ultimate categories; not as elementary indefinables.

Similarly, 'order', 'events', 'neutral stuff', 'tensor impulse in the four-dimentional continuum', 'something that fills space'—all these picturesque substitutes for the old conception of matter denote something which exists outside our mind; something which distinguishes the substratum of the phenomenal world from nothing. The question is about the nature of that something, the existence of which is not disputed.

If it is immaterial, why not say so? But that would be taking up a dangerous position. Absolute idealism is a double-edged sword. It throws matter out of the front door only to let it in by the back door. Instead of reducing the material world to a ghostly reality, absolute idealism legalizes it. As the 'emanation', 'crystallization', 'incorporation' of absolute idea, material things acquire a real, not ghostly, reality. And once you let the devil in, it slips into the place of primacy. Plato, Descartes, Hegel—all served the cause of materialism. The scientific spiritualists of our time cannot take up a bold, consistent position without ruining their whole case. Hence their love for mysticism, which is useful for confusing issues.

IV New Physics

Classical physics pictured the world as follows: There are indivisible particles of matter, each having a constant mass. The particles persist through all time, each occupying a definite point in space, at each instant of time. Each particle exerts force upon other particles, the effect of which is to produce acceleration, that is, deviation of the particles from their respective rectilinear paths. Acceleration is inversely proportional to the mass of material bodies. All physical systems—stars, planets, stones, trees, animals, men—are more or less complicated combinations of indivisible material particles, having continuity in space and time, exercising mutual influence, according to strictly deterministic laws.

The world of new physics is built of protons and electrons. They are constituents of the material particle—atom—of classical physics. As its constituents, protons and electrons must be also material entities. But they, particularly the electrons, which may turn out to be the more basic unit, are not like the material particles of classical physics, because they do not seem to have continuity in space and time; and in the absence of continuity, it is not possible to assert that their mutual interactions are governed by any strictly deterministic laws.

On the face of it, the difference appears to be considerable, even fundamental. Ponderable matter is gone. The world of new physics is made of an attenuated stuff which hovers on the boundary-line between matter and energy. The tangible units of this elusive stuff, having no simple location in space and continuity in time, appear to defy determinism. If determinism goes, the mechanistic conception of the Universe must also go. On the top of all this, the concepts of space and time have undergone a veritably revolutionary change. Absolute space and the uniform flow of time are gone. Spatial and temporal separation between two objects are not constant for all observers. The further we go, the picture becomes even more perplexing. Space is curved. Time has no independent existence. It is mixed up with space. Indeed, space, time, matter—all three are merged into a four-dimensional continuum, in which events take place.

Ether has been thrown out of the new world of physics; and the same disgrace has befallen an older member of the Cosmos, namely Newton's 'Force of Gravitation'. Most disconcerting of all, however, is the discovery that energy does not flow continuously; it has an atomic structure. The quantum phenomena have until now defied all efforts for the coordination of the entire body of modern physical knowledge into a logical system, having a relation of continuity with the theories of classical physics. Not only are the quantum phenomena irreconcilable with old physical ideas; they even contradict the Theory of Relativity. While the Theory of Relativity brings out the fact of continuity underlying the cosmic mechanism, and running through all cosmic events, the quantum phenomena indicate discontinuity.

These puzzling facts can be easily woven into a highly mystifying world picture is support of the contention that new physics has completely outmoded the naïve notions of the past, repudiated the crude, mechanistic, determinist, materialist doctrines, and cleared the ground for a mystic view of the world—for the resurrection of religion on a scientific basis.

There is, however, nothing so very new in new physics. If we look at the world of new physics closely, we find old friends in new guise. Of course, the new physical theories represent a tremendous advance upon the theories of classical physics. In that sense, they are certainly new. Our knowledge of the world, macrocosmically as well as microcosmically, has grown amazingly in consequence of the discoveries made during the last half a century of physical research. But new theories are only a continuation of old theories; they are constructed on the basis of the latter. They are not mutually exclusive. Old theories are not discarded as wrong. In the light of new data, accumulated in course of the investigation carried on in accordance with the old theories, they have been amended, modified, refined, elaborated.

Deprecating the fashion of talking that the theories of classical physics have been found wrong by more modern physical research, Professor Frederick Soddy writes:

> There is a certain quality of permanence about experimental scientific discoveries, which is not always believed. An important addition to experimental knowledge, whether made in the time of Robert Boyle or yesterday, is never displaced. Points of view may change; theories interpreting and explaining experimental knowledge may have their periods of adolescence, maturity, and decline; but the framework of the structure, the experimental facts around which ideas are arranged, is too well and truly laid to fear demolition. Even when, as in the present day, the foundations of science are shifted to an ever deeper and more fundamental place, the experimental basis of facts is unthreatened. The idea that the whole edifice of chemical science was tottering to its fall as the result of the discovery of the intra-atomic change of radio elements, is one that has always been too absurd to call for reply.

Again:

> There is sometimes loose talk—even among scientific men, attempting to generalize concerning other subjects than those in which they have won their position—that the scientific hypotheses of one age become the laughing stock of the next. But such talks are often the laughing stock of their own age to those best qualified to form an opinion. [*Science and Life.*]

The theory of Relativity and the Quantum Theory constitute new physics. Generally speaking, the former covers macroscopic entities, events and relations. Of the two, definite philosophical inferences can be at present made only from the Theory of Relativity, which is practically rounded up as a logically self-contained system. The Quantum Theory is still in a state of flux. Facts covered by it are not yet fully systematized in such a way as would offer a reliable ground for philosophical deductions which could have more than a tentative value. The 'revolutionary' features of new physics belong to the sphere of the Quantum Theory. They are features of the subatomic world. Having pushed its investigation into regions, unknown previously, physics has discovered new and strange facts; facts that do not readily fit into the old theoretical structure. On the basis of the newly discovered facts, as soon as they are established as ontological facts, and are completely systematized, new theories will have to be developed. But they will not replace the old theories; they will only supplement the latter. Both together will compose the entire body of physical knowledge.

Laws of science are never absolute. Their objective validity lies in their approximation to the laws of nature. The laws formulated by new physics do not prove that the laws of classical physics were false. These are true as far as they go. The new laws go farther. They represent a closer approximation to the laws of nature.

Scientifically, the fundamental achievement of the Theory of Relativity is the reconciliation between gravitation and electromagnetism. The reconciliation represents a grand synthesis of the vast body of knowledge about nature, acquired step by step, through observation and experiments, during three hundred years, ever since the days of Galileo. The way towards this reconciliation was prepared by the accumulated result of theoretical as well as experimental researches, conducted on the basis of a set of hypotheses which constituted the foundation of classical physics. In course of those researches, facts were found and ideas crystallized, which could not be satisfactorily explained and fitted into the theoretical structure of classical physics. The explanation is supplied through the introduction of the principle of Relativity.

The discord between Newtonian dynamics and the laws of electromagnetic propagation of energy, as stated in Maxwell's equations, is removed by discarding some of the hypothetical categories of classical physics. A priori assumptions or postulates are abandoned when, in the light of a posteriori knowledge, they appear to be unnecessary, even if in the past they provided a point of departure for fruitful research, or filled up gaps in the knowledge of nature. Gravitational force and ether, for example, were such stopgap hypothetical categories. As soon as the gaps disappeared in the course of the advance of our knowledge, physics could do without them. The discord between the two main bodies of classical theories—Newtonian Mechanics and electromagnetism—which together explained practically all observed phenomena, was largely due to their respective hypotheses, namely, gravitational force and ether. The one implies action at a distance, while the other postulates a continuous medium.

With the Theory of Relativity, physics has been able to throw off the ballast of unnecessary hypotheses. Consequently, the entire body of physical theories has been coordinated into a harmonious whole, representing a higher level of knowledge, a closer approximation to the objective truths of nature.

As regards the hypothesis of the gravitational force, the way to its final rejection by Einstein was prepared by the theoretical works of Kirchoff and Mach. Kirchoff was a classical physicist. Mach, by virtue of his purely negative criticism of Newtonian dynamics, stood on the borderline between the old and new physics. The two together developed a theory of mechanics which dispensed with the category of force as conceived by Newton. Their theory was elaborated and perfected by Hertz, also a classicist—the last of the Mohicans, so to say—in a way which directly led to the result that there is only one law of motion, which strikingly approximates Einstein's Kinematics. It has been pointed out by Bertrand Russell that 'although the whole of this development involved no essential departure from Newton, it paved the way for the Relativity Dynamics'. In other words, there is a continuity between classical physics and the Theory of Relativity. Indeed, Russell goes so far as to make the following declaration, which lays even a greater stress upon the fact of continuity underlying the entire history of the development of modern physical science, and consequently of natural philosophy.

He writes:

> And now that the theory is fairly complete, one can see that, theoretically, it ought to have been discovered by Galileo, or at any rate as soon as the velocity of light became known. It represents a technique, a better philosophy than that of Newton; indeed, one of its most remarkable feature is the adaptation of the technique to philosophy. [*The Analysis of Matter*.]

The Theory of Relativity, thus, is the logical outcome of classical physics; the whole store of experimental data and theoretical knowledge, acquired since the days of Galileo, has gone into its making. Philosophically, it represents an improvement of the mechanistic cosmology of Newton, not a repudiation. Bertrand Russell maintains that materialist philosophy has received a severe blow from the Theory of Relativity. If, philosophically, it is simply 'better' than Newton's philosophy of nature, as Russell himself correctly states in the passage quoted above, the difference is only quantitative, not qualitative. Philosophically, the Theory of Relativity does not repudiate materialist natural philosophy in favour of idealism or any other school of philosophy antagonistic to materialism. It frees materialism of some vulnerable features, and establishes materialist philosophy upon a firmer foundation of empirically acquired physical knowledge. That is the obvious meaning of Russell's statement, and it contradicts the fashionable thesis that the philosophical implication of new physics is the rejection of materialism.

Philosophically, the Theory of Relativity is better than Newton's philosophy of nature, because it does not require the a priori elements postulated by the latter, which supplied the opponents of materialism with the butt of their attack. Newtonian cosmology, though mechanistic, made room for a supernatural agency, so long as the nature of gravitational force remained a mystery. The Theory of Relativity has solved this mystery. Einstein's Kinematics does not require force in addition to matter. No place is left for the hand of God.

Einstein has improved Newton's philosophy by the 'adaptation of technique to philosophy'. What does that mean? It means that the cosmology represented by the Theory of Relativity is strictly empirical, mathematically deduced from experimental data. It is entirely free from the speculative elements—the metaphysical features which entered into Newtonian natural philosophy. The Theory of Relativity shows that a mechanistic view of the Universe results from the technique of physical observation, measurement, and general principles deduced through rigorous mathematical analysis of the strictly verified data thus obtained.

Practically all the experimental data and mathematical technique, which went into the making of the Theory of Relativity, were collected and developed over a whole period of research, conducted by a series of physicists and mathematicians on the basis of the hypotheses of classical physics, before Einstein combined the two sets of results (experimental data and mathematical technique) fruitfully into a coordinated, logically self-contained, system of physical knowledge of decisive philosophical significance. The rejection of the hypothesis of a continuous medium (ether) and the revolution in the concept of space and time were inherent in the negative result of Michelson–Morley experiments to measure absolute velocity through space. That famous experiment was made already in the eighties of the last century. Efforts made to explain the negative result of that experiment, particularly those of Fitzgerald, Larmor, and Lorentz, directly led up to the birth of the Theory of Relativity. All those forerunners of this theory were classicists.

The revolution is essentially philosophical, particularly, in the epistemological sense. The philosophy affected by the revolution is not the philosophy of nature, closely associated with classical physics, and developed into a quasi-materialist, mechanistic conception of the Universe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. On the contrary, it deals the final blow to classical idealism by liquidating the absolutist conceptions of space, time, matter, motion, and force. The Theory of Relativity frees the mechanistic philosophy of nature from its flaws and fallacies, which were, and still are, seized upon for setting up all sorts of veiled idealism. It makes a great contribution to the victory of materialism. The philosophical outcome of the Theory of Relativity is bound to be positive, because, as a system of physical theories, it is not antithetical to, but stands in the relation of continuity with, classical physical ideas.

These changes in the conceptual scheme of scientific thought are exactly of the kind demanded by philosophical criticism of the metaphysical foundations of classical physics. Broad writes:

> I hope to be able to show that these modifications, which are forced on us as philosophers when we begin to deal with the concept of matter, are of somewhat the same kind as those which the physicists have had to make for purely domestic reasons. If this can be shown even in rough outlines, it will greatly strengthen the case for the newer views of space, time, motion and matter. There is much in these views which is at the first sight highly paradoxical and upsetting to common sense, so that it is of some advantage even to the scientist to know that they can be justified on other grounds than the special needs of his science. On the other hand, it is always a comfort to the philosopher to know that he is not simply *bombinans in vacuo*, but is working on lines which have been found to lead to useful results in some concrete region of science. [*Scientific Thought*.]

It was the function of philosophy to define the nature of the concepts and categories, the functions and relations of which were the object of scientific research. As a result of this division of labour, philosophy, on the one hand, bungled its function, because the task it undertook could not be accomplished before science had created the necessary conditions. Only in the revealing light of empirically acquired knowledge of nature, could such metaphysical concepts as space, time, force, etc. be defined; in other words, the physical content of such a priori common sense concepts could also be discovered. On the other hand, it was tacitly admitted by science that there was a limit to the reach of its investigations. But in course of time, science transcended that limit. In search of the laws of nature, it pushed its investigation beyond the functions and relations of the basic physical entities. The intrinsic character of these entities, their internal structure, also became objects of scientific research. Thus, science, in course of its development, encroached upon the preserves of philosophy, and attacked the problems which the latter had so woefully failed to solve.

The philosophical significance of new physics lies in the fact that it brings problems, hitherto considered to be metaphysical, within the compass of physical research. Such basic concepts as space, time, matter, causality, etc. are no longer objects of speculative thought. Exact knowledge about their intrinsic nature and inner structure is being acquired through observation and experiment.

For ages, philosophy speculated vainly about the nature of time and space. Examining the traditional metaphysical concepts in the light of experience and experimental data, the Theory of Relativity discovers their ontological content. It shows that space and time are not metaphysical categories; that they do not precede matter; that, on the contrary, the concepts of space and time result from our experience of the being and becoming of matter. According to speculative philosophy, space is the receptacle of matter. Newton took over this metaphysical concept of space, and introduced it into classical physics. Einstein has shown that empty space is a meaningless, inconceivable, concept; that space exists because material objects exist—as the distance between any two of them. Similarly, there is no absolute time which flows in a metaphysical void. The concept of time results from the physical fact of becoming. It is the interval between two events, that is, changes in any given object.

The task of attacking problems regarding the internal structure of mater has fallen to the really new science of atomic physics which is governed by the Quantum Theory. For classical physics, matter was composed of atoms, which were supposed to have no internal structure. New physics has not only analysed (and actually broken up) atoms into protons and electrons, but has ascertained the quantitative value of these newly discovered units of the physical world. Investigation is pushed still farther as regards the internal structure of these units themselves. In consequence of that investigation, the old philosophical concept of substance is shedding its metaphysical character and is appearing as something accessible to experience; that is, as a physical category which can be measured mathematically. All forms of radiation have been traced down to electric action; and electricity has been found out to be composed of material particles. The newly acquired knowledge about the structure of matter has settled the old controversy between the pluralist and unitarian views of substance, conceived as a metaphysical category. New physics had discovered substance to be all-pervading as well as corpuscular.

The distinctive character of the new physical theories, and the philosophical significance thereof are clearly indicated in the following quotation from Heisenberg:

> With the advent of the Theory of Relativity, it was necessary for the first time to recognize that the physical world differed from the ideal world conceived in terms of everyday experience. The experimental material, resulting from the modern refinement in experimental technique, necessitated the revision of the old ideas, and the acquirement of new ones, but as the mind is always slow to adjust itself to an extended range of experience and concepts, the

> Theory of Relativity seemed at first repellantly abstract. Nonetheless, the simplicity of the solution for a vexatious problem has gained it universal acceptance. To mould our thought and language to agree with the observed facts of atomic physics is a very difficult task. In the case of the Theory of Relativity, it proved advantageous to return to the older philosophical discussion of the problems of space and time. In the same way, it is now profitable to review the fundamental discussion, so important for epistemology, of separating the subjective and the objective aspects of the world. Many of the abstractions, that are characteristic of modern theoretical physics, are to be found discussed in the philosophy of past centuries. At that time, these abstractions could be disregarded as mental exercises by those scientists, whose concern was with reality; but today we are compelled by the refinement of experimental art to consider them seriously. [*The Physical Principles of the Quantum Theory*.]

The boundary-line between science and philosophy can no longer be maintained. Physical research is no longer limited by the formalist view of reality. It has become concerned with the nature of reality—a subject formerly left to philosophy to be treated speculatively. Therefore, problems, for centuries discussed drearily by philosophy, are being tackled and gradually solved by the scientific method of observation and experiment. The refinement of experimental technique has brought within the compass of physical research such categories as were formerly considered to be metaphysical, and as such subjects of pure thought, that is, speculation. The a priori concepts of such categories must necessarily change so as to correspond with the exact knowledge about them, which has been acquired through the empirical method of observation and experiment. The Theory of Relativity has been able to give a simple solution for the vexatious problem of time and space, because modern physical research, with its refined experimental technique, has revealed the nature of these 'metaphysical' categories, discovered the content of these concepts. Conceived as absolute metaphysical categories, independent of and antecedent to all physical phenomena, time and space naturally presented baffling problems. But the problems ceased to be baffling as soon as, in the light of observed facts and experimental data, it was realized that time and space, as elements of the physical world, did not possess that absoluteness associated with them as ideal metaphysical categories. All mystery about space and time disappeared in consequence of the discovery that they enter into our experience only as relative entities. Their absoluteness is indeed an empty concept. Mysticism results from the attempt to define the absolute. Because the absolute, if it is really absolute, must be indefinable. Any definition of the indefinable is bound to be clouded in mystery, couched in enigmatic terms, as all the classical philosophical definitions of space and time are. We can define only what we know. Exact knowledge is derived through observation and experiment. Spatial and temporal phenomena can be observed and measured only as relative entities—in their relation to matter. The Theory of Relativity solves the vexatious problem of time and space by exposing the meaninglessness of the absolutist, ideal, concepts of these categories. It dispels all mystery about them by showing that, as a realizable reality, they cannot be independent of, and antecedent to, the physical being, but are properties thereof and therefore can be defined, measured, realized in relation to the movements of, and changes in, physical objects.

But it is shocking for human mind to be jolted out of a traditional mode of thought. Illusions cannot persist, unless they are taken for reality. Once taken for reality, illusions disregard experience. The absolutist notion of space and time is so deeply embedded in human mind that it cannot be easily eradicated. For the average mortal, it is rather an article of faith than a philosophical concept. Hence the extreme difficulty of visualizing space and time as they are really discovered to be through systematic observation and refined experiment.

New physical theories, therefore, are not mystifying. On the contrary, they throw new flashes of light on the truths of nature; but new flashes naturally dazzle our eyes in the beginning. We are loath to give up ideal notions for the concrete realities of experience. The revolutionary significance of new physics is that it compels us to change a priori metaphysical concepts in accordance with experienced facts. The Theory of Relativity is more than a theory of physics, in the technical sense. It is a cosmological conception, built on the solid basis of the total store of physical knowledge accumulated during the last three hundred years of scientific research. Consequently, its epistemological significance is very far-reaching. It is a comprehensive system of philosophy, not a closed system of speculative thought, but a harmonious explanation of all observed natural phenomena in the light of empirical knowledge.

It is more difficult to mould our thought and language in accordance with the discoveries of atomic physics, because they concern entirely new, previously unsuspected, phases of the physical world. The Theory of Relativity is the culmination of a whole period of physical research. The Quantum Theory, on the contrary, opens up a new field of physical investigation. Classical physics studied the diverse phenomena of nature with the object of discovering general laws governing them. It took matter for granted. Matter and energy were the fundamental hypotheses of classical physics; its elementary indefinables, so to say. The internal structure of these basic categories is the subject of the present-day physical research. The metaphysical concept of substance has been thrown in the melting pot. The conception of matter has to be adjusted to the exact knowledge about the structure of the basic units of the physical world. Philosophers disputed about the nature of substance. Some, led by Descartes, held it to be all-pervading; others favoured the corpuscular conception expressed in Leibniz's theory of Monad. Atomic physics is well on the way to settle the old controversy of speculative philosophy; and it promises to reconcile both the views of substance. Because, the basic units of the physical world have been discovered to possess the property of waves as well as of particles.

Naturally, it is extremely difficult to grasp this new conception of substance, which absorbs matter and energy into a dynamic, unitary, primordial, physical being, constituting the background of all the phenomena of nature. It is extremely difficult, because it cannot be conceived in terms of everyday experience. The conception is highly abstract, and can be expressed only in obscure mathematical language. Hence the theories of atomic physics appear to be mental constructions. But they are derived from observation and experiment, just as any other scientific theory.

Here we are up against the old problem of philosophy—the problem of perception. The theories of new physics are not derived from direct perception. But the experimental verification of these theories of so very abstract nature proves that they do represent knowledge of objective physical realities. On the other hand, any abstraction contains a large subjective element. Thus, physical research is leading to a point where the line of demarcation between the subjective and the objective disappears. If it is empirically discovered that, in the long run, the subjective cannot be differentiated from the objective, the most puzzling problem of philosophy, namely, the epistemological problem, will be solved. Modern physical research is leading us to the realization of the fact that external world is a misnomer. We are integral parts of the world of our experience. We do not watch the world as outsiders. Our consciousness, our ego, our reason—all these subjective categories are inseparably interwoven in the texture of the so-called external world. These subjective constituents of nature are parts of the whole complex of the objective physical world. They grow out of the background of the physical world, and therefore can serve as the instruments for acquiring knowledge about it. If mind was essentially different from matter, there could be no possible contact between the two, and knowledge would be impossible. Biological sciences have led us to the realization of this basic fact of materialist monism. Now physical research is reaching the same point from the other side—through the analysis of the inner structure of the basic units of nature.

VI Substance and Causality

It is not true that new physics, as represented by the Quantum Theory, has discarded the notion of substance. As a matter of fact, philosophically, it completes a task begun by the Theory of Relativity. It abolishes the notion of absoluteness regarding the remaining two categories, namely, substance and causality.

The Theory of Relativity reduces the entire cosmic scheme, including space, time, mass, motion, force, energy to one single category. The ultimate units of that fundamental reality are conceived as 'events', instead of mass-points, in order to lay emphasis on its dynamic character. The world is not a static being; it is a process of becoming. Therefore, it should be interpreted in terms of 'events', that is, of changes in the state of its ultimate constituents. Only that way can we get a realistic picture of the cosmic scheme. Because 'events' are dynamic physical magnitudes, intervals between them are spatial as well as temporal.

So long as physics and philosophy believed in absolute space and time, regarded these as ultimate categories, logically antecedent to being and becoming, the criterion for the reality of matter was simple location in space. Matter was conceived as minute particles of mass occupying discrete positions in space at given moments of time. Atomic physics has discovered that matter does not possess those properties—always in the absolute sense. The notion of simple location in space must be abandoned. From this, it is inferred by some philosophically-minded scientists that the old concept of substance must be discarded: matter does not exist physically, because its ultimate units are not extended in space. That conclusion is inevitable if we hold on to the idea that existence is extension in space. The revolution in the concept of space, brought about by the Theory of Relativity compels rejection of the old definition of existence. Matter does not exist in space. On the contrary, space is a function of matter.

Subatomic research has disclosed that matter is not constructed as classical physics hypothetically pictured it to be. The world of new physics is constructed out of a substance, in which the difference between gross matter (particles with spatio-temporal continuity) and energy disappears. The Theory of Relativity indicates mathematically that mass and energy are mutually convertible. That possibility was deduced from observed facts. Thus, the way to the abolition of dualism has been discovered. Matter has been found to be of electric nature; on the other hand, it has been discovered that electricity is composed of material particles.

The new knowledge about the substratum of the world does not imply a denial of the reality of matter. The problem raised is about the structure of the ultimate substance. The concept of substance is affected by the revolution, in so far as it was identified with mass. Mass is a property of matter; but it is variable like all other properties. The absoluteness of mass disappears already in the Theory of Relativity. Energy is a form of matter, and matter is a vibratory substance. Atomic physics has reduced matter to energy. That does not mean a denial matter. No Quantum Physicist would deny the existence of atom or its constituents—electrons and protons. The revelation is that even electrons and protons are not the ultimate units of matter. But they are measurable entities, and no serious scientist maintains that measurable entities can emerge out of nothing.

Only a generation ago, physical reality of the atom was disputed. There was a 'crisis' in physics at the turning of the century. That is an old story now. Atom has survived Mach's attack. Today, electron has become the object of doubt. But atoms are composed of protons and electrons. If these latter are not material entities, the doubt about the physical reality of the atom will raise its head, and the whole magnificent system of atomic physics will look ridiculous—much ado about nothing. The 'metaphysical' concept of substance remains the basis of physics. Only, it is no longer an a priori concept of a hypothetical category. The present theory about the nature of the stuff of the world is based upon empirical knowledge. It is a posteriori established. The new concept of matter is only a refinement of the old conception.

The position has been depicted as follows by Professor Andrade of Cambridge:

> The older conception of atom was good enough to explain the phenomena then considered, and we can still use it for certain simple problems; but to explain the facts of radioactivity and of spectroscopy, we must introduce the newer features of the theory. The new theory is also better than the old, because it demands only two ultimate things from which atoms are supposed to be built up. The fewer entities we need to assume as fundamental, in order to explain things, the better our theory. We do not claim any finality for it: some new discovery may suddenly force us to modify our idea in many particulars, but the success of the present theory shows that we shall probably have to retain many of the general features of the theory. It is an excellent working hypothesis, because it has shown us law where law was not hitherto discovered, and connection between different phenomena, where before we knew no connection. It has enabled us to arrange our known facts in a more convenient and logical way, and has led to the discovery of very interesting new facts. It is justified by its worth, but is not final. Science is a living thing, and living things develop. [*The Mechanism of Nature.*]

Thus, the revolution in the concept of matter, brought about by the discoveries of Quantum Physics, does not mean that all established physical theories are upset, with the consequent downfall of the mechanistic–materialist philosophical notions associated with classical physics. The impending process is towards a higher synthesis of ideas. Matter is not an inert mass moved by a mysterious force. Matter and energy are the dual manifestations of substance, which enters our experience as these manifested forms. Being realizes itself in becoming.

Clearly, physics is reverting to the idea of cosmic continuity, apparently disturbed by the discovery of Quantum phenomena. Continuity, assumed by classical physics, does not exist as pictured in Newtonian dynamics or by Maxwell's equations of electromagnetism. Quantum phenomena prove it. But wave-mechanics—the prodigious progeny of the Quantum Theory—depicts continuity on a higher level. Wave-mechanics indicates the way to a final systematization of our knowledge of the subatomic world into a theoretical system, in harmony with the other branch of new physics, namely, the Theory of Relativity.

Indeed, a rational explanation of the Quantum phenomena can be found only in an application of the physical principle of Relativity to the study of microcosmic events. Wave-mechanics represents that application. It is heading towards the point where the two aspects of the world of new physics meet, and merge into each other. Eddington, of all, has confidently drawn this conclusion from the highly abstract mathematical researches of Dirac, one of the ablest of Quantum physicists.

At the end of the last century, it was discovered that atom was not the smallest particle of matter, as it had been assumed to be ever since the days of Dalton. It was discovered that an atom consisted of a nucleus, charged with positive electricity, and one or more negatively charged particles distributed around the nucleus. The negatively charged particles were called electrons. This theory, tentatively suggested by Professor Thompson of Cambridge, was substantiated during the following years by the discovery of radium, and the study of the phenomenon of radioactivity. That was the beginning of atomic physics.

A more accurate picture of the inside of the atom was presented to the world by Rutherford in 1911. His theory, subsequently elaborated by the famous Danish physicist Niels Bohr, is as follows: The inside of an atom is like a miniature solar system. The positively charged nucleus—proton—is situated in the centre, the electrons moving around it like the planets around the sun. Practically the entire mass of the atom is concentrated in the proton. Only a very tiny fraction of it is distributed among the electrons. Yet, in size, the electrons are thousand times larger than the protons, and move at a terrific speed, sometimes nearly approaching the velocity of light.

The almost imperceptible mass, coupled with a prodigious speed, in the beginning made the impression that the electron was not a particle of matter. The impression produced 'the crisis of physical theories' at the turning of the century. There was much talk about 'dematerialization of matter'. But the impression was altogether unfounded, because Thompson himself had estimated the mass of an electron.

The incredibly small magnitudes of atomic physics are not the result of only abstract mathematical calculations. They have been verified experimentally. The fact of fundamental importance, which emerges from the biography of the electron, is that there is nothing immaterial about it. Harvey Gibson writes:

> The relatively massive proton has been identified with the smallest known unit of positive electricity, and the light electron has similarly been shown to be the smallest unit of negative electricity. Yet, each are particles of matter, in the sense that they possess mass, and are subject to gravitation, and so, in its last analysis, matter is indistinguishable from electricity. [*Two Thousand Years of Science*.]

An electric current is a stream of electrons. This fact represents a great positive achievement of atomic physics. It conclusively settles an age-long, fundamental question of philosophy. Reduced to the unitary elements of electricity, the materialness of the Universe does not disappear into mystic nothingness. Because, electricity is a thing; it exists physically.

If we are to look for the ultimate unit of 'pure' matter (in the gross sense of the term), there is the neutron. Nature, after all, is not so niggardly as Eddington accuses her to be. She does not keep her secrets hidden in unfathomable mystery, so that man may never discover them. Whoever earnestly search for them are rewarded with real knowledge.

The inner core of the atomic nucleus is made up of neutrons, while the active protons form the outer shell. Then, there are the free electrons, moving in space around the nucleus. The ninety-two hitherto known chemical elements are combinations of their respective types of atoms varying in bulk and complexity. This large collection of microcosmic solar systems presents atomic physics with a problem which appears to defy human ingenuity. To sort them out so as to establish some general principle of atomic mechanism was, of course, the first problem. Niels Bohr attacked the problem, and produced a plausible solution by 1913.

He described the inner mechanism of atom roughly as follows: Each free electron in an atom can move alternately in many orbits—circular or elliptical. But the number of these possible alternative orbits is definite in the case of each electron. When the normal condition of any atom is disturbed through the rise of temperature, the free electrons jump to higher and higher orbits, that is, to orbits farther and farther away from the nucleus. Conversely, the process of cooling down is marked by the fall of the electron to successively lower orbits. The motion of the electrons in their alternative orbits accords with the classical law of electrodynamics. But the classical law cannot explain the jump from one orbit to another—upwards and downwards. Thus, there arose a new problem. There appeared to be a rift in the whole system of physical theories; the laws of atomic mechanism do not fully coordinate with the classical principle of electrodynamics governing the entire physical Universe. In this rift lies the root of the so-called new physics, which, with its principle of Uncertainty or Indeterminacy, set the scientific world agog.

The inside of an atom is not a subject of direct observation. Our knowledge of it is inferential. The inferences, however, are made from clear and accurate data gathered through spectrum analysis. In the hypothetical structure of Bohr's atom, the electron is a particle. Yet, the fact that it monopolized a whole series of orbits contained a clue indicating its real structure. It is a particle, and nevertheless somehow spreads over a whole orbit. A pure, honest, particle need not be so exclusive. If the election was a pure particle, there would be nothing to prevent more than one from moving in the same path. Refined spectrum analysis revealed the fact that, while in the upper orbits the electron behaved like a particle with a definite mass, moving strictly according to the classical electrodynamic law, only jumping unconventionally, from time to time, the definiteness disappears in proportion as it falls to lower orbits, nearer the nucleus. The electron undergoes a metamorphosis from a particle, with a series of definite positions, to a sort of a line, the points composing which cannot be singled out.

The clue offered by the breakdown of Bohr's hypothesis is that in the lower orbits the electron does not behave like a particle. Following up this clue, de Broglie and Schroedinger advanced the theory of wave mechanics, according to which the electron in the lower orbits is not a particle of matter with definite positions in space. The discovery that the ultimate constituent of matter does not have simple location in space, together with its corollary that therefore the speed of its motion cannot be measured in term of time, is taken for the foundation of the opinion that physics has broken away from the principle of determinism, and has revealed the metaphysical origin of the physical world.

The foundation, however, is altogether imaginary. De Broglie showed that light simultaneously possessed the properties both of particles and waves. This was established theoretically, by mathematical analysis, as well as through experimental observation. The general principle to be derived from the new theory of light evidently is that physical properties, which were previously to be considered as mutually exclusive, are really associated throughout the Universe. The trail to this synthetic, unitary view of the structure of matter had been blazed by the principle of relativity, which established the identity of matter and energy, and abolished the absoluteness of all concepts.

Having formulated the new synthetic theory of light, de Broglie applied its general principle to the study of the structure of atom. He thought that the failure of Bohr's hypothesis to stand refined spectrum analysis might be analogous to the failure of Newton's corpuscular theory of light: electrons might not be pure particles as postulated by Bohr.

Following up the new line of approach, Professor Schroedinger conceived the electrons not as tiny specks of matter, but as electric charge distributed around the nucleus of the atom. The microcosmic electric field was pictured by him as in a state of vibratory motion. On the foundation of that hypothesis, he formulated the theory of wave mechanics. Any possible doubt in this connection was further dispelled by the fact (demonstrated by Schroedinger as well as by Professor Born of Goettingen, who also had been working on the problem independently) that the several theories about the structure of atom, formulated independently, all equally led to results as actually observed through spectrum analysis.

The fact is of conclusive philosophical significance. Such an unanimity of theories, all established independently, through more or less pure abstract reasoning, decisively dispels any possible doubt about the objective reality of the subject of their common concern. Our present knowledge about the ultimate constituents of the Universe may be uncertain; atomic mechanism may still be only a partially solved problem; the electron may not exist in space and move in time like a conventional particle of matter; the interior of atom may properly belong to the category of the unobservables; nevertheless, there cannot be any doubt about it that atomic physics deals with material realities which exist objectively, outside the mind of the physicist. Its theories are not the bridge over which one passes from the imaginary reality of the physical universe to the real realities of the mental world. They do not prove that the roots of things are to be traced into an incomprehensible region of unobservable, which are unknowables. The new physics does not analyse physical phenomena down to an ultimate constituent which is 'mind stuff'. In short, it does not flow into the unfathomable ocean of metaphysical speculation.

The sum and substance of the entire body of the theories of atomic physics is that ultimately matter possesses both corpuscular and undulatory properties. Just as we are no longer surprised to find both the properties in light, so it will be with matter as a whole before long. The deeper we penetrate into the structure of matter, into the foundation of the physical Univese, the more precise becomes our knowledge. The successive theories do not cancel each other. The fact that our past knowledge was defective does not prove that the present is unreliable; that we are dealing with unknowables. On the contrary, it proves that objective realities, existing outside, independent of our mind, cannot be fitted into our traditional moulds of thought. The task of science is to know them as they really exist. Those accustomed to think in terms of absolute categories—a habit rooted in the background of religious and metaphysical culture—are bewildered by the new discovery, and are prone to make a mystery out of it. But conventional modes of thought ultimately break down under the impact of new knowledge. Our mind is moulded by our knowledge of nature. The discovery that nature knows no absolute categories will necessarily free our mind from conventional concepts, and teach it to think in terms of relativity.

The Quantum Theory teaches us to conceive light as a phenomenon, corpuscular as well as undulatory. The principle of relativity abolishes the distinct concepts of space and time, and teaches us to visualize things in a four-dimensional continuum. The wave theory of matter, which is the product of the two, will similarly teach us to approach the ultimate constituents of the Universe with a mind free from the concept of indivisible particles—a concept which dominated physics, so fruitfully, ever since the days of Democritos. Just as changes and readjustments in the theory of life do not abolish life, similarly, the impending revolution in the concept of matter does not abolish matter; does not merge physics into metaphysics.

By reducing the physical world to a dynamic, unitary substratum, modern physical research finally solves the old philosophical problem of substance. It is now meaningless to distinguish the essence from its properties, to differentiate the reality from appearances. It was necessary to postulate an essence of things, when the diverse aspects of physical existence were still to be traced to a common foundation. That having been done, the notion of an invariant essence, distinct from changing properties, becomes superfluous.

Primordially, matter is not something which exists in space and changes in time. It is the sole existence. The existence of matter is realized in its transformation into multitudinous patterns. The concepts of space and time are derivative categories, representing respectively the geometrical and chronological functions of material existence. In the absence of matter, there will be neither space nor time. It is obviously absurd to make the reality of matter conditional upon its subservience to categories, the reality of which depends on the reality of matter itself.

The physical world exists. It is not to be constructed by the mind of man. It is there, to be studied, explained, known, understood. That is the function of science. Science has performed that function, and has not discovered the roots of physical reality vanishing into nothingness. It has not reduced matter to mind. It has proved the self-sufficiency of matter. Matter is an objective category. Self-sufficient objectivity is the ultimate reality. Therefore matter is the only reality. It is ontologically real. Its epistemological reality logically follows.

Like substance, causality also remains in new physics. The application of the statistical method in the researches of atomic physics does not disprove causality. The degrees of the uncertainty of our knowledge are expressed in terms of probability. Criticism does not permit the surreptitious transfer of the uncertainty of our knowledge to the object of knowledge. The probability of a thing or event is proportional to our knowledge concerning it. The greater the knowledge the greater the probability. When predictions, made as probabilities, all happen to turn out to be correct, it is no longer a matter of probability. In the utter absence of the element of uncertainty, associated with the conception of probability, the conception must disappear. But in the formal logical sense, it still persists even then on the strength of the argument that, the calculations being based not on exact knowledge, but on probability, one can never say for certain that the next prediction will not be wrong. From the point of view of this extravagance of pure empiricism, no scientific theory has unquestioned validity. We should always expect the next pot of water to freeze when placed on fire. The implication of the argument is that no theory is possible except on the basis of an absolute knowledge of all the possible phenomena to be embraced by it; that we cannot know anything unless we know everything. As with the human faculty of cognition it is not possible to know everything all at once, this theory of knowledge leads straight to the doctrine of revelation: Truth can never be known, it is revealed.

The laws of being are laws of strict causality, whereas the laws of becoming are laws of probability. Becoming presupposes being; therefore, statistical laws are based upon the assumption that the entities involved in a process are individually governed by strict causal laws. It would be impossible to work out any law of probability, except on this assumption. A collective order cannot be founded upon chaotic individuals. If some individuals are found to defy the statistical law, that does not prove the failure of the strict laws of causality; the logical inference to be made therefrom is that our observation has been faulty—the law has not been put to a correct test. On the other hand, the conception of a being, independent of becoming is a purely abstract conception. Isolated or static being is a logical category. It has no physical reality. Therefore, in extreme cases, such as in the case of an isolated electron, strict law of causality may not be experimentally demonstrated. Nevertheless, it is logically incontestable.

By the very nature of its subject matter, wave mechanics is bound to be statistical. It does not deal with isolated particles. It has reduced the ultimate constituents of nature to a state of collective becoming. Consequently, the law governing matter, deep down in the foundation of its structure, must be statistical. But when the law, discovered inferentially, is always borne out by facts observed in nature, and by experimental data, its accuracy cannot be doubted. Any uncertainty, then. becomes only a matter of formalist logic. The difficulty arises only when a necessarily statistical law is tested by mathematical experiments with individual electrons as ideally isolated particles.

Determinism and probability are not mutually exclusive conceptions. On the contrary, a synthesis of the two enables us to have a truer picture of relations as they really exist in nature. Coordinated with the concept of probability, determinism loses its teleological connotation. On the other hand, statistical laws cannot have any validity if the principle of causality is totally denied. In short, probability is the dynamic view of determinism. Moreover, induction remains the rock-bottom of scientific research; but a rigidly mechanical view of determinism cannot be logically reconciled with induction. Probability is methodologically preferable. With this principle, scientific theories gain in purely logical validity, while causal connection remains empirically indisputable. When the number of entities entering in calculations is so very great as to be incalculable, almost approximating infinity, then there can be no absolute certainty about prediction. All the causal influences, even upon a particular event, cannot possibly be traced. In such a situation, determinism has to be interpreted in terms of probability. But determinism remains. The innumerable number of possibilities of a given situation are all determined. Even if the most improbable event happened, it would be causally determined.

There is no place for miracles in nature. The new physics does not let them into its world. One of the leading quantum physicists, Professor Born of Goettingen, goes to the extent of suggesting that the foundation of the physical world may be regarded as a 'field of probability'. But he is decidedly of the opinion that the doctrine of probability in no way affects the basis principle of physical science that, whatever happens, is caused; something does not come out of nothing. He says that 'it would be entirely wrong to proceed to introduce a belief in miracles into our view of nature'.

Rejection of the idea of causality—that there are invariant relations in nature—will mean blasting the very foundation of science. For, the point of departure of all scientific enquiry is the belief that the universe is a law-governed system, and that these laws can be discovered, understood, and quantitatively stated. As long as predictions can be made, and events happen approximately as predicted, the principle of physical determinism stands.

VIII The Mystery of Life

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, biology was largely dominated by vitalism and teleology. The mystery about the origin of life was believed to be beyond the reach of science. It was generally held that behind the veil of that mystery was the transcendental realm of a creative force which knows no law except its own, and which, in its turn, is never to be comprehended by human understanding. It was pointed out that the very term 'organic' or 'living' was the antithesis of the concept of inert matter; it stood for a spiritual being. It was further maintained that the purpose of a creative power pervaded the animal kingdom. Every particular organism was supposed to be created to fit into its allotted place in a grand scheme of divine providence. The more advanced was the knowledge about the wonderful phenomena of organic nature, particularly of man, the stronger became the anthropomorphical atavism. It was argued that such a wonderful machine could be created and run only by an equally wonderful machine, but immensely more perfect.

Upon the discovery of the cell, the modern science of the phenomena of motion (life) in animals and plants, namely, physiology, also adopted the mechanistic view. But the morphological sector of biology—the science dealing with the origin and growth of the forms of organic beings—persistently held on to teleology. So long as the mechanistic law determining the origin and development of organic forms was not discovered, the mysterious hand of the creator was assumed behind the complicated phenomena which were believed to be so many carefully manufactured parts of the great universal machine through which the divine purpose was realized. A miracle remained the cause of the organic world. It did not make any difference whether the miracle was performed by a personal God or the mysterious vital force. Finally, Darwinism drove teleology out of its last stronghold, morphological biology.

The basic principles of Darwinism, outlined previously by other eminent naturalists, such as Lamarck, St. Hilaire, Goethe, and others, completely revolutionized the science of biology. Formerly, biology simply discovered, verified, and assorted various organic forms. Darwinism made us acquainted with the causality of the process of continuous development which runs throughout the organic world. Therefore, Haeckel defined Darwinsim as 'the mechanical explanation of organic forms, or the science of the true cause of nature'. Darwinism, once for all and definitely, defined the position of man in nature. It established the groundwork of a non-miraculous history of the development of the human race.

Darwinism explained the mechanism of the evolution of organic forms from the lowest to the highest. The works of Huxley and Haeckel suggested the possibility of the spontaneous generation of organic matter out of inanimate nature. Still there remained 'the missing link' to baffle biologists and to provide the spiritualists with what they declared to be an irrefutable argument against materialist philosophy. Eventually, the baffling problem of the 'missing link' was also solved theoretically by the discovery that there is no uniformity in nature; that the process of evolution includes sudden jumps. In the beginning, the discovery appeared to challenge the validity of the law of causation. Later on, it turned out to be the explanation of what had previously seemed to be erratic in the process of evolution. The theory of mutation revolutionized the doctrine of evolution. In the organic as well as in the inorganic nature, quantitative changes suddenly become qualitative. That happens whenever diverse elements involved in a particular process reach a point of interrelation in their respective movements. The collective momentum attained at such a point assumes the form of a sudden jump which disturbs the gradualness of the process. A new phenomenon springs into being with no visible immediate causal connection with its background. The causal connection, however, is there—hidden in the swift process of the change becoming qualitative from quantitative. For instance, steam is separated from water by a sudden jump in the molecular motion of water caused by the application of heat. Sudden changes are not erratic events. They are involved in the process of evolution brought about necessarily by the cumulative effect of the operation of the law of causality. A particular process of evolution culminates in a revolution which marks the origin of a new species.

The conclusive establishment of the fact that the complicated human organism is but the highest form in the evolution of organic matter which, in its turn, is the result of a specific physico-chemical process involved in inanimate nature drives teleology and spiritualist philosophy out of the last ditch. Life is not a mysterious immaterial force. It grows out of inanimate matter in a certain state of organization. Intelligence is a physiological function; brain is the organ of thought; and thought is the function of the brain. In short, the vital phenomena are not manifestations of a mystic metaphysical force. They do not testify to a spiritual essence of man. They can be traced back to the lowest form of organic matter.

Half a century before Darwin, Lamarck had laid down in broad outlines the mechanistic principle of modern biology. He wrote:

> Life is nothing more than a mere physical phenomenon. All appearances of life can be traced back to mechanical—physico-chemical—causes which lay in the very structure of organic matter. The simplest forms of animal and plant, which represent the lowest stage of the process of the evolution of life,

> have grown and are still growing out of the root cause. The old philosophers thought of life-force—of a soul—of the animal. They ascribed souls even to plants. Instead of positive knowledge, they operated only with words, and set up an unfounded and unclear notion. But as soon as we leave nature, and deliver ourselves to the fantastic fabrications of the power of imagination, we lose ourselves in confusion and blunder. The only knowledge that we can have is, and always will be, that which is derived from our positive study of the laws of nature. [*Zoological Philosophy*.]

Darwin, however, carefully avoided the question of the origin of organisms or organic matter. In *Origin of Species* he expressly remarks that he has nothing 'to do with the origin of the soul nor with that of life'.

Haeckel carried Darwin's theory to its logical conclusion, and reinforced the Lamarckian hypothesis of spontaneous generation of organisms with observational data. He wrote:

> If we do not accept the hypothesis of spontaneous generation, then, at this point of the history of development, we must have recourse to the miracle of a supernatural creation. The creator must have created the first organisms or a few first organisms from which all others are derived, and given them the capacity of developing further in a mechanical way. To me, the idea that the creator should have in this one point arbitrarily interfered with the regular process of development of matter, which in all other cases proceeds entirely without his interposition, seems to be just as unsatisfactory to a believing mind as to a scientific intellect. [*The Riddle of the Universe*.]

Scientific knowledge about the history of the Universe shows that organic beings did not exist on this earth from time immemorial. They could not, because of the uninhabitable state of this planet as well as of the other members of the solar system. Only at a certain stage, after the earth's surface was covered by water, organisms came into being. The descent of man can be traced all the way back to that remote point of history of the earth. The preponderance of water in organic matter is evidently due to the fact that water is the precondition for the birth of organisms.

Haeckel discovered the very simplest forms of organisms floating on the surface of the sea. He called them the monera and described them as 'organisms without organs'. He wrote:

> They are very small living corpuscles, which strictly speaking do not deserve the name of organism, not composed of any organs at all, but consist entirely of shapeless, simple, homogeneous matter. The entire body of one of these monera is nothing more than a shapeless, mobile, little lump of mucus or slime, consisting of an albuminous combination of carbon. A simpler or more imperfect organism we cannot possibly conceive. [*General Morphology*.]

Huxley also discovered a similar form of lowest organism in the depth of the ocean—twelve to thirteen thousand feet below the surface. They are found in great quantities, sometime in the shape of roundish, formless lumps of mucus, and sometimes in the form of a network of mucus, covering fragments of stone and other objects. Huxley named these creatures of his discovery Bathybius Haekelii.

The discovery of these simplest and lowest organisms threw some light on the secret of life. At the time of Lamarck, and even later on, the probability of the hypothesis of spontaneous generation was generally doubted, because the lowest forms of organisms known then were of relatively complex nature. The very term 'organism' means a combination of various parts (organs), which function in unison to produce the phenomenon of life. The monera and the Bathybius Haekelii were not composite organisms; they 'consist solely of a single chemical combination and yet grow, nourish and propagate themselves [Haeckel]'. A simple compound of carbon is the seat of original life, which is nothing more mysterious than the totality of the molecular motion of matter. Originally, all organisms are nothing more than simple lumps of an albuminous substance called protoplasm—a combination of carbon with oxygen, hydrogen, and nitrogen.

There is no essential difference between organic and inorganic matter. All material bodies are formed out of the combination of such chemical elements as carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, sulphur, potassium, sodium, etc. These chemicals are also found in vegetables and animal bodies. There are no such elements which are absent in the inorganic substance. The difference lies in the 'vital force', in other words, life. That is to say, when a certain combination of a number of chemical elements produces the phenomenon called life, it enters into the domain of organic nature. The primary manifestation of this phenomenon is the process of nutrition and multiplication. The simplest and lowest forms of organism discovered by Haeckel and Huxley appear to mark the boundary-line between the organic and the inorganic nature. Haeckel wrote: 'On account of the perfect homogeneity of the albuminous substance of their bodies, on account of their utter want of heterogeneous particles, the monera are more closely connected with the inorgana than with organisms, and evidently form the transition between the organic and the inorganic world of bodies.'

Protista is the collective name given to the different forms in which original organic matter exists, the monera being the lowest of the forms. They do not as yet contain the kernel, that is, they have not yet developed the process of differentiation inside the mass of albuminous carbon compound. The next higher in order is the amoeba, which contains the kernel, which is formed simply by contraction and condensation of the substance in one point.

> All protista have soul, that is to say, they are animate, as well as all plants and animals. The soul's activity in the protista manifests itself in their irritability,

> that is, in the movements and other changes which take place in consequence of mechanical, electric and chemical irritation of their contractible protoplasm. In the protista, as in all other organisms, the activities of the soul are traceable to molecular motions in the protoplasm. [Haeckel.]

The infinitely variegated and numerous physical and chemical properties of the albuminous substance (carbon compound) are the cause of the so-called vital force, which distinguishes organic bodies from the inorgana. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, science was ignorant of this fact. The discovery of the cell revolutionized physiology. It showed that all forms and motions of organic bodies represented the aggregate of the forms and motions of the cells, which composed all organic bodies. Later on, it was discovered that cells were small bits of plasma with a nucleus which appeared to be the centre of the vital phenomenon. The discovery of monera had revealed the most interesting fact that a lump of slime without the centre of the vital phenomenon was also an 'organism', because it nourished and propagated itself. The inevitable scientific inference therefrom is that the growth of the cell—the seat of the vital phenomenon—is inherent in the physical and chemical properties of the plasma, that is, carbon compound.

> The peculiar chemico–physical properties and specially the semi-fluid state of aggregation, and the easy decomposibility of the exceedingly composite albuminous combinations of carbon are the mechanical causes of those peculiar phenomena of motion which distinguish organisms from the inorgana, and which, in a narrow sense, are usually called life. [Haeckel, *The History of Creation.*]

The absence of any fundamental distinction (as regards composition, formation, and motion) between organic and inorganic bodies destroys the mystic faith in the supernatural creation of the vital force. Spontaneous generation of life out of matter becomes easy of conception. Monera and Bathybius Haeckelii show rudimentary functions of life in 'organism without organs'. There we have nearly reached the point where life spontaneously grows out of a certain combination of inorganic matter. All that remains to be found is how this particular compound of carbon is first formed. Even failure to establish this last link will not necessarily leave the chain incomplete. For, it is quite possible that spontaneous generation no longer actually takes place, owing to the change of climate and atmospheric conditions of the surface of the earth. In remote primeval times, there was a very great abundance of carbon (the coal deposits bear eloquent testimony to the fact). It can be very reasonably assumed that under those favourable conditions organic matter came spontaneously into existence, and ever since has been multiplying and propagating itself as the foundation of all the forms of vegetable and animal life.

But it is not necessary to depend altogether on this logically irrefutable supposition. Although experiments to establish the hypothesis of spontaneous generation have until now failed to produce satisfactory results, all the avenues are by no means exhausted. On the contrary, the magnificent achievements of biochemistry and physiology have all but destroyed the miracle about the creation of organic bodies. A century ago, it was asserted that chemistry would never be able to manufacture the so-called organic compounds which were supposed to be the creation of the mysterious supernatural vital force. Yet, already in 1828, the miracle was done by a mortal man—Professor Woehler of the University of Goettingen. More recently, synthetic chemistry has succeeded in producing a large number of organic carbon compounds. Some of them are so complicated as to come very near to the albuminous substance called plasma.

Organic substances, such as sugar and protein materials, are formed when ultra-violet rays act on a mixture of carbon-dioxide, ammonia and water. This has been experimentally demonstrated. This process must have been the origin of life on earth. Fermentation is the origin of vital processes. In the remote period when life originated, there was no oxygen in the atmosphere. Even now it can be observed that life lives by fermentation before it can have oxygen. Life is enzyme action, which is a purely chemical process. Willstaetter is of the opinion that life is the sum total of biochemical changes, and vital energy is only a form of physical energy.

A systematic experimental investigation into the origin of life began when the discoveries of Redi and Leeuwenhoek in the middle of the seventeenth century led to the formulation of the doctrine of biogenesis. Pasteur's researches, more than a hundred years later, also led to the conclusion that living beings originated only from other forms of life. But the origin of life was still to be discovered; and most biologists continued to believe, as Lamarck, Cuvier, and others had done previously, that life had originated from dead matter in the remote past. Pasteur held that fermentation was impossible without life. Before him, Schwam had shown that yeast was a mass of micro-organisms. Pasteur maintained that, when those organisms were killed (sterilized), no fermentation could take place. Liebig held a different view. Pasteur's researches, however, seemed to prove that a living organism was necessary to produce fermentation. But Buchner produced fermentation with crushed (dead) yeast. The experiment proved that fermentation was a catalytic process produced by a substance itself dead, but which could be obtained, for the time being, only from the yeast.

Primeval atmosphere (after the cooling down of the earth's crust) contained no oxygen or very little of it. The present supply of oxygen warrants that theoretical deduction. At present, there is just enough of it to burn all the store of coal and other organic remains. There is evidence of the existence of carbon-dioxide and ammonia in the primeval atmosphere. Ultra-violet rays cannot reach the earth's surface, because they are stopped by ozone in the upper atmosphere and oxygen itself in the lower strata. When there was no oxygen, they reached the earth's surface and acted on a mixture of water, carbon-dioxide, and ammonia. The water covering the earth's surface at that time was warm, conducive to intense chemical activity. In the welter of chemical changes, complex carbon compounds were produced, some of them of colloid nature, functioning as catalysts or enzymes. That state of physico–chemical organization of inorganic matter could very well be the breeding ground of life. At its origin, life did not grow out of another organism, but out of chemical energy resulting from inorganic compounds. This inferential conclusion is corroborated empirically by the fact that there are kinds of bacteria which do not require oxygen; they derive energy from chemical changes (fermentation). Most probably, they belong to the order of bacteriophages.

Primitive forms of life did not grow out of the original organic substance until the water on the earth's surface cooled down considerably below the boiling point. No oxygen was available. The precursor of life derived energy from fermentation—a chemical process. Enzymes are fermentation agents. Nobody maintains that they are living beings. The bacteriophage is a step beyond the enzyme on the road to life. At that stage also appear the viruses. The bacteriophage multiplies; therefore it is a living or semi-living organism.

We know life only as connected with certain definite chemical compounds which consist essentially of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen. How the actual living substance—protoplasm—is related chemically to these compounds, is not yet fully explained. Protein is the main constituent of protoplasm. Colloid compounds may be regarded as the intermediate stage between dead and living matter. Spontaneous generation of life takes place in this region now being investigated by colloid chemistry, which is building the bridge over the gulf between the organic and inorganic world.

There are no chemical substances or processes in organisms, which cannot be imitated. Beginning with Woehler's manufacture of uric acid, a succession of biochemical compounds have been synthetically produced. The three primary classes of biochemical compounds associated with living cells—carbohydrates, fats, and protein—function in the juices of the cell as colloids or emulsions. It is becoming more and more evident that chemical changes can occur on the greatly extended surfaces of colloid particles. In these particular surface-reactions, probably, lies the key to many of the mysteries of life.

Finally, the latest development of bacteriology has practically eliminated the borderline between the dead and the living. The chemical compound of a cell does not possess life. The link between living and dead matter, therefore, must be somewhere between the cell and the atom. D'Harelles' discovery of the bacteriophages definitely establishes this hypothesis. Life appears in the 'world of neglected dimensions'—in the world of colloids that intervenes between the world of molecules studied by chemistry, and the phenomena covered by cytology.

In the last analysis we are up against the problem of another 'missing link' down in the scale of evolution. The actual cycle of life is biogenetical. The break occurred once upon a time. We cannot reverse the process of the evolution of the earth from its fiery origin to observe actually the first appearance of life. But the process can be reconstructed conceptually, and deductions made therefrom logically should be theoretically valid. Looking back upon the evolution of the earth, we can indicate a point where life could have spontaneously appeared in consequence of the operation of physico–chemical laws. Artificial creation of life is not an indispensable evidence for establishing this hypothesis. The decisive factor is the knowledge that it was so.

The phenomenon called life appears under certain definite physical conditions, which are absent except on the earth. That warrants the hypothesis that life is a chemical process, which takes place in a certain physical state. Once in an earlier stage of evolution, the most primitive form of life appeared, it started on its own line of evolution. There began the cycle of life—protista–plant–animal–decomposition into organic compounds—their absorption in the organic world. The original point of contact between the organic and inorganic world broke up. Therefore, spontaneous generation cannot be traced. It was an event in the past. It can only now be established logically. The fact that the cycle of life takes place in the context of the physical world, that inorganic matter is continuously going into the formation of organisms, that every point of the cycle is connected with the physical context shows that life is conditional upon matter. The assumption that it is an independent category, which uses matter as the means for its manifestation, cannot be taken seriously, unless there is a possibility of showing that life can exist by itself. That has been done neither by theological vitalism nor by the 'scientific' neo-vitalism. Therefore, the origin of life can no longer be kept shrouded in a metaphysical mystery. It is in the process of the evolution of matter, which includes emergence of novelties. Life originated as a novelty in the context of the physical universe.

XI A Scientific Theory of Knowledge

A more accurate formulation of the generally correct causal theory, together with a corresponding clarification of the old realistic doctrine of 'representative idea', gives us the theory of knowledge which results from modern physical research. To put it differently, the result of modern physical research, supplemented by the latest contributions of biology and psychology, enables us to free the empirical theory of knowledge from the fallacy and ambiguity which caused its degeneration into subjectivism.

The causal theory, as formulated by Locke, confounded sensation with perception. Consequently, on the one hand, sensation came to be regarded, erroneously, as a state of mind; and, on the other hand, mind was reduced to a passive observer of pictures presented to it. An analysis of sensation in the revealing light of modern scientific knowledge shows the way out of the impasse. Perception is not caused by external agencies, as the old causal theory held; external stimuli cause sensations which are perceived by the mind. Mind being a complicated state of consciousness, which itself originates as the reaction to sensations, the baffling question, how could states of mind be caused by non-mental agencies, does not arise; and it becomes possible to restate the doctrine of representative idea in a form which does not lead to Idealism. Knowledge is possible because there is a causal connection beween mind and matter.

Ideas are representative of realities inasmuch as they are derived from experience. I must know a thing before I can have an idea of it. But ideas are mental pictures; they represent the knowledge of things, not things themselves. If I am incorrectly informed about a thing, my idea of it will be false. Yet, it will be 'representative' of my distorted knowledge. Knowledge results from perception, which is organic reaction to physical contacts. We know things, not ideas. Knowledge is not composed of ideas; on the contrary, ideas are derivatives of knowledge. That is how ideas can be representative, and scientific ideas are representative.

The analysis of sensations and the resulting insight into the process of cognition enables us to reverse the falsely conceived traditional relation between knowledge and ideas. The representativeness of ideas does not result from their identity with sensations. Ideas, being products of the interaction between the mental and the physical, cannot circumscribe the radius of the mind's reach. They result from mental activity; the cause is never limited by its effect. Berkeley's famous argument that ideas could be only like themselves no longer serves the purpose with which it was advanced. Ideas, of course, are mental pictures; but mind is not limited to the contemplation of those pictures, which are products of the cognitive action of mind. Besides, ideas are entirely different from what Berkeley conceived them to be. His argument was based on the false identification of ideas with sensations. Therefore, it is utterly irrelevant to ideas as they really are. Since the very existence of ideas is conditional upon knowledge, it is palpably absurd to assert that we know only our ideas.

Thus restated, the doctrine of representative ideas becomes compatible with the results of modern physical research, which compel revision of some preconceived notions about the structure of the Universe and laws governing it. To be representative, ideas must correspond with things as they really are. If the world of experience is characterized by the absence of absoluteness, ideas about it also must have that character. In other words, they must change according to the knowledge of the world. The representative character of ideas is relative, because it is necessarily proportional to the extent and accuracy of knowledge. At each given moment, ideas depict things as we know them to be, or as much of them as we know for the moment. Ideas correspond not with things, but with objects.

In formulating a scientific theory of knowledge, the object must be clearly differentiated from the thing. The one is an epistemological category; the other, ontological. An object is a thing perceived. The two are not identical, ontologically. Objects are always things; that is to say, they are existentially real. Sensa also are things; even ideas are mental pictures, and picture is a spatial concept. But things are not always objects—of perception or of knowledge. They may exist, many do exist, without attaining the epistemological state of being 'objects'. America existed before it was discovered; so did the planet Uranus.

Again, an object of my knowledge is not always and necessarily the whole of the thing, the contact with which stimulates in me the organic faculty of cognition. Incompleteness of the knowledge of a thing does not affect its objectivity. Besides, as objective knowledge, it is complete, because it covers the parts of the thing actually perceived. As regards the thing, it is not complete; but as regards the object, it is. Therefore, scientific knowledge is always objective, although ideas resulting from it may change from time to time. Being based on objective knowledge, all scientific ideas are representative—of realities. If a thing is real, its parts are also real. The failure to distinguish between the object and the thing has been the cause of much epistemological muddle. The emphasis laid on the fact that objects are always associated with mind, are in a way mind-dependent, has obscured the objectivity, that is to say, their ontological reality, which consists of their being the perceived aspects of parts of things. But to be dependent on mind is not to be states of mind.

Yet, the proposition that the immediate content of knowledge is states of mind is predicated on the false argument that, because objects are mind-dependent, they must be states of mind, their existence consists of being perceived. That is how physiological processes (sensations) caused by external agencies came to be regarded as states of mind, and empiricism degenerated into subjectivism, which is denial of the possibility of knowledge.

The way out of this muddle lies in the realization of the fact that, while epistemologically objects are mind-dependent, existentially they are independent. Perception is perception of things; it leads to the knowledge of the external world, although what is directly perceived is sensation. When modern science shows that sensations are not only electrochemical processes, independent of, and anterior to, mind, in the history of organic evolution, but actually are events in the physical continuum called the 'external world', it becomes abundantly clear how knowledge is acquired. Knowledge is possible because mind is a highly developed, extremely complicated, state of consciousness; a property of living beings (of higher order) to react to external stimuli.

The central point of a correct theory of knowledge is that cognition is a relation between mind and the world. Knowledge is objective and subjective, at the same time. Both the correlates—the knowing self and the world known—are equally vital. To solve its problems, epistemology must start from the ontological reality of mind as well as of the external world. For epistemology, the question of precedence is irrelevant. That is a question of ontology. Epistemology must be simply guided by the facts that mind exists, and that knowledge is conditional as much on the existence of mind as on that of matter. Such a point of departure does not involve any admission of psycho–physical parallelism, either in the individual or on the universal scale. Mind is real because it is a part of the physical world. This finding of biology enables us to regard mind as an empirical category; and it makes the decisive contribution to the formulation of a correct theory of knowledge. It is also the objective theory of knowledge, because it objectifies the self itself.

Knowledge presupposes a conscious being differentiated from the rest of nature; but the latter grows out of the background of a physical continuum and remains embedded therein. 'External world' is a misleading term. We are integral parts of the world of our experience. The mind of others belongs to my 'external world' just as their bodies. And my mind belongs to the 'external world' of others. Self is always an embodied self. The knowing mind can never be conceived as a disembodied spirit. The conception of self includes the corporeal being. Our bodies, organs of sensation, the nervous system, the brain, the entire cognitive apparatus, are parts of the physical world. We do not watch the world as outsiders. Or egos, our minds, our thoughts, our intelligence are all interwoven with the physical processes of the 'external world'. This does not imply an uncritical endorsement of the questionable doctrine of the identity of thought and being. The point is that thought (all kind of mental activity) is a function of organic beings on very high level. Thought presupposes, is conditional upon, being. The subjective elements of the process of cognition are parts of the all-embracing complex of physical nature. The exclusion of the metaphysical concept of disembodied spirit, rejected even by those who wish to establish the universality of mind empirically, and the consequent disappearance of psycho–physical parallelism guarantee the objectivity of empirical knowledge. And all knowledge is always empirical, conceptual thought, the highly abstract theoretical structure of mathematical physics being no exception.

Life is the immediate foundation of mind. In the absence of life, the existence of mind cannot be proved. Life being a phenomenon of physical nature, mind also is a part of nature. The activities of our own minds are events in the physical world, which is outside of ourselves. The very act of perceiving, knowledge, thinking takes us beyond ourselves. Therefore, even introspection or self-contemplation is not purely subjective. Even the most intimate mental act has an objective reference.

Knowing is an act of mind; knowledge, however, is not identical with thought any more than thought is identical with being. Thought is mind's property, whereas knowledge is a possession. The distinction is fundamental. The one is inherent, an inalienable quality; whereas the other is acquired—from outside. To think is in the nature of mind; but it may or may not possess some particular knowledge. Knowledge is possessed by mind; it exists in the mind; but it is not of the mind. It is knowledge of what exists outside the mind. Therefore, ontologically, it is not identical with mind.

But knowing, as a mental act, is subjective; knowledge is something acquired by mind, and what is acquired can neither be identical with, nor born of, the acquisitor itself. The fact that knowledge is acquired, has to be acquired, proves that it is not manufactured by mind, independently of the external world. Nor is it, on the other hand, identical with the object. It is the result of a relation, and, as such, equallly dependent on both the related terms. But once it is there, it acquires an existential reality of its own. Scientists die; knowledge of nature won by them survives. On the other hand, things disappear in the abyss of time, but knowledge about them remains a human heritage, unless it also is somehow destroyed as any other thing. Knowledge is a thing—a peculiar kind of thing, but a thing nonetheless. That is why it is objective. Genetically dependent, existentially it is self-sufficient; and functionally, creative. Product of mental activity (to be distinguished from mind), it changes the mind. This could not be, if mental activities were limited to mind itself, if ideas were the content of knowledge. Ideas transform mind because, resulting from the knowledge of the external world, they increase the mental outfit. Mind is the organic faculty to know The greater the knowledge the sharper the faculty. Primitive consciousness is the foundation of mind; at the same time, it is the simplest form of knowledge; and itself, it is a mechanical property of organic matter, in a definite chemical state. Thus, nothing immaterial enters into the process of cognition which, as a process involving different material entities, is entirely governed by the mechanical laws of physical nature.

To sum up: Sensations are bodily events, causally connected with the external world. There is no interruption in the causal chain. All sensations, in the last analysis, are tactual. Knowing as well as perception takes place on the plane of direct physical contact. The causal chain throughout is physical, not logical. Therefore, all arguments of the subjectivist are irrelevant. The outer link, relation between sensations and their external causes, is similar to the causal connection between events in the physical world. It is governed demonstrably by physical laws. The middle link is the neural connection between the organs of sensation and the brain. Here we have to do with the organic property of reaction to stimuli. The process is electrochemical, also subject to physical laws. Perception, thus, is no mystery. Perception as well as sensation is an event in the physical continuum which includes the body. It, therefore, puts mind in direct contact with the external world. It is not a contact between two qualitatively different entities. Mind itself originates in the organic property of reaction to stimuli. So, the last link, cognition, also is a physical relation.

Cognition, however, is not a tacit reception or recording of messages from the external world. The messages are stimuli; cognition is intelligent reaction to them. Perception is an automatic organic reaction. Cognition is an interpretative, denotative, selective, act. Knowledge is not a mere conglomeration of messages received at random. It is a characterizing judgement about the nature of things from which the messages come. Perception makes us conscious of the existence of things; cognition is insight into their nature afforded by percetual data. Higher organisms (with developed brains) possess the faculty not only of receiving impressions of the environment, but also that of weaving them into a coherent mental picture of the physical reality they represent.

Experience is the foundation of knowledge. But knowing is not a purely empirical process. It is selecting, interpreting, systematizing, coordination, of empirical materials—sense data—in a rational, logically coherent, explanation of perceptual facts. In building this conceptual picture of the world, mind is not limited by messages received, by what is 'simply given in consciousness'. As it has been picturesquely put, 'brain works with hand and feet', as well as other organs of action. That is to say, knowledge results from the constant and continuous reference of percepts to their external sources. That is done in various ways—actions of daily life, planned experiment, intelligent observation, memory, logic, thought, and the domination of the 'unconscious' on all our conscious behaviour. 'The fibres of the external world run into our consciousness'. Brain is composed of our end of the fibres. So, brain processes can be traced back, along the fibres, to their physical causes in the remotest parts of the universe. Mental activities are cerebral functions. The mind is causally connected with the whole of the physical universe. It is not circumscribed by the events taking place in its body. Reacting to those events, it goes out to the external world, conceptually.

Knowing is a matter of logically tracing the lines of physical causality from the contents of immediate experience outwards. Percepts are purely empirical entities. Concepts are synthetic. The former are automatically given. The latter are consciously constructed. Knowledge is a conceptual scheme born out of the insight into the nature of things, gained through critical examination, rational coordination and logical deduction of perceptual data.

ON STEPPING OUT OF JAIL

My Line
Message to Workers
A Talk with Bombay Pressmen

On 20 November 1936 at 3 p.m. Roy wrote to Ellen:

> I am out. . . .The event happened at eight thirty this morning. . . . I expect to meet Nehru tomorrow at a place you already know—Bareilly. . . . I am going to stay with him at Allahabad for some time—until the plan of movement and place of residence is fixed. . . I find the atmosphere welcome, and feel confident that I shall be able to do effective work.

Roy's strong constitution had been absolutely wrecked in prison, and he was medically advised complete rest—at least for a few months. But that was not to be. Almost immediately after his release he got involved in the major public issues of the day, and found hardly any time either to rest or to return to the philosophical inquiry which he had begun in jail—till after nearly ten years. On 28 October Jawaharlal Nehru had written to a colleague in Dehra Dun to convey to Roy Nehru's invitation to come to Allahabad and stay at Anand Bhawan—'to take some rest to recoup his health'. Nehru was then touring in some districts in the United Provinces (U.P.), and on 20 November he was scheduled to be in Bareilly. Roy joined Nehru at Bareilly where, at the Political Conference, Roy was elected a member of the U.P. Congress Committee and the All India Congress Committee. He was also appointed a member of the Mass Contact Committee of the Congress. On the way from there to Allahabad he stopped briefly at Lucknow where, in response to many pressing requests, he issued a statement entitled 'My Line' (he had already issued two short statements almost immediately on his release). At Allahabad he was welcomed by the Congress General Secretary J.B. Kriplani, and he stayed for a week with Nehru. He proceeded to Kanpur where he had a strong following, and from there to Bombay which became his headquarters.

In the last week of December 1936 the Indian National Congress held its session in Faizpur, a village in the Jalgaon district of Maharashtra. Presiding over the Congress, Nehru welcomed Roy as 'an old and wel-tried soldier in India's fight for freedom. Com. M.N. Roy has just come to us after a long and most distressing period in prison, but though shaken up in body, he comes with fresh mind and heart, eager to take his part in that old struggle that knows no end till it ends in success.' At the Congress Roy spoke on the Constituent Assembly, explaining how Congress Committees at every level could be developed as organs of struggle against foreign rule, and through struggle how they would become organs of power, and how the Congress itself, with the backing of the people, would become the Constituent Assembly which would proclaim Independence and give the sovereign Indian republic a truly democratic constitution. He also proposed a programme of action incorporating the basic minimum requirements of the people which would involve the masses in the national struggle for independence. He held, as he had done in his writings before, that 'the national revolution means the agrarian revolution'.

Thus, instead of having a rest or a period of recoupment, Roy got actively involved in the national political movement within less than a month of his release. His statements and the press interview immediately after his release were published by the Bombay 'Royists' in December 1936 as a 15 page booklet entitled 'On Steping Out of Jail' from 36 Goutam Nivas, Bombay 4, priced one anna. The booklet consisted of two statements ('Congress the Common Platform' and 'Congress not Going Red, but Communists Getting into the Congress'), 'My Line, 'Message to Workers', and 'A Talk with Bombay Pressmen'. I have left out the first two statements; the remaining three items are given here in entirety. This completes the period of Roy's writings and publications upto the end of 1936.

SNR.

My Line

Since my release I have been receiving numerous messages of sympathy and goodwill from organizations as well as individuals. As it is not possible to send separate replies I hereby express publicly my appreciation of the sentiment demonstrated. I am eager to participate actively in the struggle for freedom, and hope to make some positive contribution towards its development. Although my political views are generally well-known, yet there seems to be a widespread desire on the part of anti-imperialist forces that I should indicate clearly and concretely the line of my future activity. Therefore, I take this opportunity to say a few words on that score.

The object of my political activity (as soon as health and other considerations will permit me to undertake it) will be to strengthen the National Congress as the organ of an effective struggle against Imperialism.[1] Freedom from imperialist yoke and democratization of the country, politically as well as economically, are the essential conditions for the reconstruction of Indian society in such a form as will have no place for mass poverty and all the regrettable cultural, intellectual, and moral consequences thereof. In other words, I shall endeavour to unite and strengthen those elements in the Congress which have already realized that National freedom is but a necessary stage in the road to a greater freedom.

It is my firm conviction that an effective struggle against Imperialism can be conducted only under the leadership of those who are inspired by revolutionary social ideals. I am of the opinion that simple talk about Independence will not take us far towards the much coveted goal.[2] Parliamentarism may prove to be a blind alley. In any case, it can never be more than an auxiliary weapon. Office acceptance is a minor issue. Election campaign should be conducted primarily with the purpose of mobilizing mass energy for a more effective form of struggle, for frustrating the sinister plan of reinforcing Imperialism through the introduction of the Government of India Act.[3] Our immediate objective is not Socialism; but it is a mistake to place political freedom and establishment of Socialism in watertight compartments of history. All sincere and earnest well-wishers of the masses must realize that the economic evils that are eating into the vitals of Indian society cannot be eradicated unless larger and larger part of the fruit of their labour remains in the possession of the producers of wealth; that is the workers and peasants. So, in order to serve its historical purpose National freedom must be defined as the establishment of such a form of government as would give real political power to the masses. That is to say, National freedom must be conceived as genuine democratic freedom.

My position can be stated in the memorable words of C.R.Das: 'We don't want to replace the white bureaucracy by a brown bureaucracy.' I shall place before the nationalist movement a clear programme of Democratic Revolution, accompanied with a concrete plan of action. That is the only way towards a more effective struggle against Imperialism. Those engaged in the struggle must know exactly what they are fighting for. We cannot go very far with propaganda and agitation. Political consciousness of the masses should be developed. Anti-imperialist forces must be organized in the fight for concrete demands. The Congress organization and leadership must be democratized, brought under the influence of the rank and file. I shall work for that purpose.

Lucknow
25 Nov. 1936

Message to Workers

It grieves me to find that the Trade Union movement today is not strong as it should be. Imperialist oppression and fierce capitalist offensive have prevented its growth. I am glad to find that in spite of terrible hardships workers have put up a brave resistance against the capitalist offensive. That gives an indication of their potential strength which, if only properly organized and consolidated, can play a decisive part not merely in their daily struggles for immediate demands but also in the national struggle for Independence.

Trade Union unity is not yet in sight, but it is gratifying to note that at least all radical elements in the Trade Union movement have sunk their differences and united under the common banner of the A.I.T.U.C. An earnest effort must be made to establish unity between the Trade Union Congress and the National Federation of Trade Union. I appeal to the N. F. U. T. leaders not to allow political differences to stand in the way but to unite in a central organization to resist effectively the capitalist offensive.[4]

But I attach far more importance to the political action of the working class. I am convinced that unless India is free from the yoke of foreign domination, not even the most minimum of these demands will be realized. Workers, therefore, have to actively participate in the national struggle for Independence. Today the Indian National Congress is the only organization in the country which can serve as a rallying ground for all anti-imperialist forces in the country. I would, therefore, appeal to all workers to join the Congress in their thousands, collectively and individually. It is only the active participation of workers in the Congress that can transform it into an effective organ of Indian masses in their struggle against Imperialism.

A Talk with Bombay Pressmen

Com. M. N. Roy gave an interview to Pressmen in Bombay on Monday the 7 December 1936. In the interview a number of question were put to him pertaining to his future programme in the Congress, the relations between labour and Congress, the organization of the anti-imperialist united front, etc. The following is a summary of the interview:

Q. What is your conception about the Congress ?

A. The Congress is an organization of the masses. It has been created by the masses. But its policy and action are not determined democratically. They are imposed from the top. That has been its great weakness. We have to change this state of affairs and make the Congress a real organization of the masses. I believe it can be done. It can be done only through the development of the radical forces in the Congress.

Q. How do you propose to organize the radical forces in the Congress?

A. It is wrong to organize them as a separate party. They must be organized as an integral part of the Congress on the basis of a programme of national democratic revolution. Socialism is not the immediate issue. Our very love for socialism should dictate us to concentrate at the present stage on national independence, for it is through national independence that we can reach socialism.

Q. Do you think the Congress as it is today is the organ of the united peoples' front?

A. I know the various limitations of the present-day Congress. But I am convinced that the Congress alone can be the organ of the united front. It requires to be transformed. But any attempts to set up a rival organization or to forge a united organ as distinct from the Congress, I consider to be inadvisable. These attempts weaken the Congress and consequently our national struggle. Any such tendency must be discouraged. Larger and larger masses of people must be brought inside the Congress. Attempts must be made to broaden the basis of the united front represented by the Congress and to see that those who were out of the Congress for some reason or the other are brought in, and the Congress made more effective in the anti-imperialist struggle. Wrong tactics and theoretical extravagances which have kept certain radical elements outside the Congress must be vigorously combatted. The pressure of the masses inside the Congress would make it more and more radical and effective.

Q. Do you stand for the workers joining the Congress individually?

A. I have already appealed to the people of India, including the workers and peasants to join the Congress. The working class cannot wait to join the Congress and thus participate in the national struggle till its demand for collective affiliation is granted. In the first place the demand will not be granted unless the workers are there to exert their pressure in its favour. And moreover we cannot forget that only a small fraction of the Indian workers and peasants is organized. Collective affiliation will touch only this small fraction. By collective affiliation only a small fraction will enter the Congress, while the large mass will remain out. There are two courses open for the solution of this problem. One is that the workers should be first organized independently and then they should collectively affiliate themselves to the Congress. This will mean putting it off for many years. For such organization would take a long time. But the struggle for freedom cannot wait. The second course is to affiliate collectively those who are organized, and in the case of those who are unorganized to enrol them individually.

Q. Does it not mean the liquidation of the class organization?

A. Certainly not. Workers and peasants will have their class organizations to conduct their struggles for their immediate economic and political demands. These organizations will be independent of the Congress and will, besides conducting daily struggle, prepare the workers for their ultimate struggle for social emancipation. But for the fight for national independence they will all unite in the National Congress. I do not visualize a new united front organ developing out of the joint working of the National Congress, the Trade Union Congress, the Kisan Congress, etc. What I visualize is the transformation of the Congress itself into that united front organ by the effective participation of the workers, peasants, and other oppressed masses.

Q. Are you opposed to the holding of a Kisan Congress?

A. Why should I be? If there can be a Trade Union Congress there can as well be a Kisan Congress. I do not see why it should come in conflict with the Congress.

Q. How do you propose to combat the new constitution?

A. Combatting the new constitution is not an easy matter. Something very serious is implied by our determination to combat the new constitution. By rejecting the constitution, the Congress has raised the issue of self-determination. It has challenged the right of the British Parliament to dictate the political future of India. But this fundamental issue has been confused by the failure to state it boldly. The real problem is the problem of the capture of power. This has to be made clear. Congressmen do not think in terms of the capture of power; but visualize some process by which power will be transferred to the representatives of the Indian people. That is a wrong perspective which precludes an effective fight against the new constitution. The problem of power must be properly posed and a concrete plan of action chalked out for realizing that goal.

Q. What are your views about office-acceptance?

A. To me it is a minor issue. You cannot wreck the constitution either by entering the Councils or by boycotting them, either by accepting offices or by rejecting them. The constitution can only be wrecked by extra-parliamentary mass action and the electoral propaganda should be utilized for mobilizing mass energy which shall be given effective organizational forms. I feel that an undue emphasis has been laid on the question of office-acceptance. I strongly deprecate the tendency of attributing motives to opponents. If there is a danger it is in the line followed. The same situation had arisen before a number of times in the Social Democratic Parties in Europe. I am not of those who think that Social Democrats are inherently perverse or degenerate. It is the logic of the situation. Even the most honest and straightforward man, once he accepts office under the present circumstances will be led by the very logic of the situation to a greater and greater compromise with Imperialism, and a larger and larger measure of surrender of his principles and policies unless he accepts office with resignation in his pocket. But then it is useless.

Q. Can we not wreck the Constitution by accepting offices?

A. It is not a question of principles. It is a question of tactics. I can conceive of a situation where offices might be utilized for combating the Constitution. But it requires a number of preconditions, such as a large mobilization of anti-imperialist forces, a clear-cut programme for the realization of the demands of the masses, and the strict control and supervision of a centralized revolutionary leadership. But unfortunately those preconditions are conspicuous by their absence.

Q. What are your plans for the Faizpur session?

A. I do not propose to do anything spectacular at Faizpur. Nothing much can be done within the short time at my disposal. But I may prepare a draft programme for circulation and discussion among the delegates and Congressmen all over the country. I would like the draft to be discussed, criticized, modified, or amended by all the Congress organizations in the Country so that next year the draft will come before the Congress, not as the proposal of a single individual or a group of individuals but as the demand of the rank and file of the Congress. No doubt it is a hard and troublesome task requiring immense energy and patience. But I propose to devote myself to this task of patiently educating and mobilizing the rank and file Congressmen.

Q. What has been the result of your talks with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru?

A. I had long talks with Panditji. But I am not in a position to divulge the details. We discussed a number of current political problems and found ourselves in agreement on most of them. Our talks related more to a general discussion of broad political trends and topics than to a concrete programme of action. But I can say that I shall be able to work in close cooperation with him.

Notes

1 At the Faizpur Congress (December 1936) Roy sent the Working Committee several proposals for activizing and democratizing the Congress Organization. These included one anna per person membership fee to be collected by Congress cadres, thereby keeping them in close and regular contact with the Congress rank and file; weekly membership meetings to discuss current political events and economic problems; making the primary committee into the forum for expression of local grievances; giving primary committees the right to submit draft resolutions to the All India Congress Committee, and other similar steps to both widen the social base of the Congress and making its members active and informed participants. *The Tribune*, Lahore, 25 Dec. 1936. SNR.

2 Roy urged upon the Congress leadership to adopt an agrarian programme that included the abolition of landlordism; abolition of all charges on the peasantry except a unitary land tax from which peasants living on uneconomic holdings would be exempted; liquidation of peasant indebtedness; control of usury (interest not to exceed 6 per cent per annum)—reforms which would secure the support of the peasantry and, by bringing about improvements in their condition, provide the basis for India's industrial development. The detailed proposals and his line of argument had already been presented in his book *Our Task in India* (the text of which is included in this volume). SNR.

3 The Government of India Act of 1935 provoked much controversy in the Congress. Nehru described it as 'a charter of slavery' which should be 'rejected in its entirety' (Nehru, *India and the World*, 1936, p. 86). The Federal part was neither accepted nor implemented. However, despite Nehru's opposition, the Congress Working Committee, with Gandhi's blessing, decided 'to explore the possibility of working the Provincial part of the constitution'. It took part in the elections to the Provincial legislatures held in February 1937. Roy took an active part in the election campaign; he toured and addressed large public meetings at Poona, Sholapur, Satara, Belgaum, Dharwar, Hubli, and many other places in regions now comprising the states of Maharashtra and Karnataka. In the elections the Congress won 711 out of a total of 1,585 seats in the provincial assemblies. It secured a clear majority in six (Bihar, Bombay, Central Provinces, Madras, United Provinces, and Orissa) out of eleven provinces of British India. In the legislatures of three of the remaining five provinces, the Congress became the largest single party (*Return showing the Results of Elections in India 1937*, Cmd. 5589).

There was again an acute division over the issue of office acceptance. After a long debate in March 1937, the AICC decided by a majority of 127 to 70 to accept office. In July 1937 Congress ministries were formed in the Congress majority provinces; eventually the number of provincial Congress ministries increased to eight. (J.S.Sharma, *Indian National Congress : A Descriptive Bibliography of India's Struggle for Freedom,* Delhi, 1959).

Roy's view that participation in the elections would broaden the mass base of the Congress proved to be correct, as Congress membership grew from 600, 000 in 1936 to 3, 000, 000 in early 1938. However, the Congress did not use the ministries 'to combat the 1935 Act' as had been promised in the Election Manifesto drafted by Nehru (*AICC Newsletter* No 7, 10 Sep. 1936). Office acceptance sharpened the division between the Right and Left in the Congress. SNR.

4 From behind bars Roy had been consistently advocating Trade Union Unity; he had in fact drafted a platform of unity shortly before his arrest (Roy Archives, Nehru Museum, File no 111/1). A Trade Union Unity Committee was appointed (V. B. Karnik, *Indian Trade Unions*, Bombay, 1960, p. 60). In 1935, on the Comintern's instruction, the Red TUC was dissolved, and its unions rejoined the AITUC (K. B. Panikkar, *An Outline History of the AITUC,* New Delhi, 1959). In 1936 efforts were made to bring about a merger of AITUC and the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF, formed in May 1933), on the initiative of V. V. Giri (of NTUF) and the 'Royist' president of the AITUC, Maniben Kara, but they were unsuccessful. Eventually, in April 1938, the two trade union federations agreed to join forces, and in September 1940 NTUF was finally dissolved. However, in November 1941 the AITUC split on the issue of support to war efforts, and the 'Royists' broke away and formed the Indian Federation of Labour (Karnik, op. cit.; P. S. Gupta, *A Short History of All-India Trade Union Congress*, New Delhi, 1980). SNR.

INDEX

Abbassids, 371, 380, 388–90, 394
Adorno, Theodor, 20n
Agnosticism, 334, 419
Ahmed, Muzaffar, 364, 512
Akasha (ethar), 325
Al-Farabi, 363, 389, 394
Al-Gazali, 363, 389, 395
Al-Hassan, 363, 389, 395
Al-Kandi, 389, 394
Al-Manon, 390
Al-Masur, 396
Al-Phetragius, 389, 396
All-India Trade Union Congress, 93, 94, 187n, 188n, 273, 274, 287n, 631, 636n
All-India Village Industries Association, 225, 241, 287n
Allies Internationaux de l'Opposition du P. C. l'U.R.S.S., Les, 2
Aney, M. S., 151, 218–20
Ansari, M. A., 152, 167n, 279, 287n
Anstey, Vera, 147n, 211n
Anti-Semitism, 454, 455
Apollonius, 392
Arbeiter Politik, 2, 3
Aristotle, 329, 330, 390, 392, 394, 397
Asceticism, 381, 405
Atheism, 323, 334, 405, 413, 476
Atomism, 327, 329–32, 335, 337
Averroes, 363, 384, 389, 393, 396, 397
Avicena, 363, 389, 392, 393, 395

Bacon, Francis, 394, 409–11
Bacon, Roger, 363, 389, 390, 395, 396
Bakr, Abu, 363, 371, 387, 389, 396
Balabanoff, Angelica, 543
Barahamihir, 516
Barbarism, 31, 202, 248, 390–2, 396, 431, 432, 446, 452, 454, 457, 469
Barbusse, Henri, 13, 20n
Bardoli, 92, 125, 147n, 223
Bayle, Pierre, 413
Beauvoir, Simone de, 544
Bebel, August, 543
Beccaria, 512
Beethoven, Ludwig van, 12
Bengal Agricultural Debtors' Bill 1935, 538n
Bengal Moneylenders' Bill 1932, 538n
Bengal Renaissance, 542–4
Bentham, J., 512
Bergson, H., 7, 465, 492
Berkeley, Bishop, 313, 356, 620
Bernstein, Eduard, 236n
Bhaduri, Anadi, 92, 194
Blanquism, 181, 188n
Bohlen, Krupp von, 443, 447, 449
Bohr, Niels, 7, 16, 20n, 568, 604–7
Bolshevik/Bolshevism (see under Communism)
Bonn, Mortiz, 452
Bonner, R. J., 563n
Borghese, G. A., 20n, 236n, 430
Borkenau, Franz, 20n, 236n, 261n, 287n
Born, M., 568, 607, 610
Borodin, Michael, 26, 27, 30, 36n, 42n, 46n, 57–60, 67, 69, 71–4, 77
Bose, Subhas Chandra, 167n, 188n, 287n
Boxer Revolt, 33
Bourgeois Nationalism, 34, 165
    State, 110, 112, 142, 259
Bourgeoisie, 37, 38, 40, 45, 49–51, 53–5, 57, 58, 61, 63, 77, 78, 103, 105, 107–10, 112, 113, 116, 118, 123–7, 129, 138, 139, 142, 172, 173, 179, 182, 186, 233, 238–42, 249, 252–5, 258, 260n, 261n, 266, 280, 281, 286, 413, 414, 432, 433, 436, 438, 440, 441
    British, 16
    Chinese, 65
    European, 111, 117

  German, 434, 438, 444
  Indian, 113, 115, 116, 120, 122–4, 211n, 222, 238, 239, 242n, 260n
  Nationalist, 35, 37, 45, 47, 49–51, 53, 54, 64, 78, 122–4, 127, 129, 130, 238, 240, 244, 245, 286, 295
  Native, 105, 116, 123
  Petty, 38, 43, 45, 55, 60, 72, 83, 85, 108, 124–7, 129, 172, 174, 179, 180, 182, 193, 433, 441, 454
  Urban Petty, 57, 73, 78, 84, 85, 181
Boyle, Robert, 593
Bradley, F. H., 492
Brahman/Brahmanism, 8, 324–6, 328, 329, 331, 334, 335, 338, 339, 344, 398, 399, 401, 419, 437, 465, 487n
Brahmacharya, 478, 479, 501, 503, 504, 545
Brahmo Samaj, 563n
Brandler, H., 11
Briand, A., 448
Brihaspati, 323, 334, 340
British Labour Party, 281
British Parliament, 16, 156, 167n, 185, 210n, 219, 263, 287n, 299, 633
British Raj, 197, 209, 264, 287n, 309n
Broad, C. D., 7, 597
Broglie, L. de, 7, 17, 20n, 568, 606, 607
Bruno, Giordano, 363, 396
Brown Army, 446, 447
Buckle, H. T., 348, 358n
Buddha (Gautama), 324, 334, 336, 338, 340, 344, 419
Buddhism, 324, 326, 334–7, 340, 341, 343, 344, 389, 398, 399, 419
Buddhist Revolution, 338, 341, 342, 389, 398–400, 419
Bukharin, N., 59n, 171
Burtt, E. A., 7

Cabanis, 348
Cai Hesen, 59n
Capitalism, 38, 101–6, 109–16, 121, 123, 126–9, 133, 137–9, 143, 165, 187n, 204–8, 224, 225, 231, 233, 239–41, 248, 249, 258, 268, 280, 282, 431–3, 440, 441, 443, 445, 447, 454, 456, 559
  Indian, 122, 157, 159, 205–7
  German, 444
Carr, E. H., 20n, 187n, 188n
Catholic Church, 374, 376, 380, 397
Catholic Popular Party, 445
Central Legislative Assembly (Legislative Assembly), 187n, 218, 219, 273, 281, 288n, 293n
Chaitanya, 401, 501
Chang Fa-K'uei, 86n
Chang Tso-lin, 30
Changsha, 70–2, 84
Charcot, Jean-Martin, 493–5, 497
Charkha, 215, 218, 246
Charvak System, 324, 334, 335
Chatterjee, Bankim Chandra, 9, 462, 542
Chatterjee, Sarat Chandra, 13, 542
Chen Tu-hsiu, 34–6n, 44, 46n, 52n, 58, 65n, 75n, 80, 81
Chengiz Khan, 30, 369
Chiang Kai-shek, 29, 53, 54, 60, 61, 63–8, 72–4, 77
China in Revolt, 25–7, 29, 88n, 91, 94
China Report, 28
Chinese Federation of Labour, 41
Chitnis, C. Y., 92, 94, 194
Chou En-lai, 29
Chu Teh, 79n, 86n
Civil Disobedience, 16, 125, 151, 152, 154–6, 159–62, 165–7n, 187n, 217, 219, 225, 226, 228n, 273, 274, 277, 287n, 293n
Committee of Action for Independence of India, 93, 193
Communism (also see Bolshevik/Bolshevism), 15, 30, 31, 37, 38, 45, 46n, 48, 49, 59n, 110, 112, 113, 178–80, 185, 187n, 195, 234, 251, 259, 280, 298, 430, 445, 446, 448, 450, 454, 458, 512
Communist International (Comintern), 2, 10, 15, 19n, 20n, 27–9, 35, 37, 38, 47, 50, 52n, 55, 86n, 88n, 92, 96, 171–4, 185, 186, 188n, 193, 194, 234, 236n, 237n, 258–61n, 364, 543, 569, 570, 636n
  Second Congress, 27, 37, 50, 52n, 236n, 242n
  Third Congress, 236n

  - Fifth Congress, 28, 58, 171
  - Sixth Congress, 3, 14, 15, 29, 91, 171, 173, 178, 194, 430
  - Seventh Congress, 15, 171–4, 177n, 261n, 274, 430
  - Executive Committee of (ECCI), 2, 20n, 52n, 55, 59n, 171, 172, 174
  - Chinese Commission of ECCI, 2
  - Seventh Enlarged Plenum of ECCI, 2, 19n, 56n
- ommunist Party, 26, 35, 37, 38, 41, 57, 61, 65n, 67, 68, 70, 71, 74, 85, 86, 92, 95, 131, 132, 146, 172, 177, 178, 182–5, 195, 233, 253–5, 261n, 274, 280, 282–6, 444
  - of Austria, 173
  - of China, 27, 28, 35, 36n, 46n–52n, 55, 58–60, 62n, 65n, 71, 74n, 75n, 77, 79n, 81, 85, 86n, 91, 173
  - of Czechoslovakia, 173
  - of Germany, 6, 91
  - of Great Britain, 91
  - of India, 91, 173, 174, 177, 180–6, 193, 194, 199, 237n, 251, 253–6, 259, 260n, 274, 364
  - of Italy, 20n, 236n, 260n
  - of Spain, 173
  - of Switzerland, 173
  - of U S S R, 48
  - of U S S R Tenth Congress, 187n
- Communist Opposition, The, 2, 6, 25, 29, 93, 152, 174, 236n, 430
- Condillac, 347, 348
- Confucius (Confucian), 34, 37, 87
- Congress, Indian National, The, 3, 16, 32, 92, 123–6, 151, 152, 154–67n, 177, 179, 180, 182, 183, 187n, 195, 196, 198, 201, 212, 213, 215–23, 225–32, 235, 239, 251, 254–7, 259, 261n, 264, 271, 273–8, 281, 283–7n, 289–92, 294–7, 299, 301n–7, 363, 474, 627, 629, 631–5n
  - Committee, All-India, 152, 164, 165, 187n, 273, 287n, 289, 293n, 305, 306, 627, 635n, 636n
  - Constitution,. 167n, 277, 286, 287n
  - Independence Resolution of the, 155, 284
  - Karachi, Resolution of the, 284
- Congress Working Committee, 147n, 151, 167n, 217–9, 221n, 235n, 287n, 293n, 305, 306, 635n
- Congress Socialist Party, The, 16, 179, 187n, 194–7, 222, 229–32, 234–7n, 241, 273–9, 282, 283, 285–7n, 292, 294, 301n
- Conservatism, 377, 378, 407
- Constituent Assembly, The, 96, 133–5, 175, 185–8n, 194, 195, 275, 291, 299–301n, 627
- Copernicus, Nicholas, 328, 396, 409, 466
- *Crime and Karma: Cats and Women*, 461, 485, 486, 511
- Cuvier, 348, 616
- Cynicism 385, 435, 445, 463, 464, 470

- Dalton, J., 7, 604
- Darwin, Charles/Darwinism, 7, 97, 349, 351, 468, 611–13
- Das, Bhagwan, 547, 549, 551
- Das, C. R., 157, 287n, 363, 630
- Datta, Akshyakumar, 542
- D'Alembert, 358
- D'Alibard, 348
- Degras, Jane, 20n, 261n
- Delhi Pact, 154, 156, 223
- Delhi Women's Conference, 561n
- Delhi Women's League, 547, 554
- Democratic Dictatorship, 62, 113, 127, 128, 130, 134, 136–9, 141, 142, 180, 186, 285
- Democritos, 329, 411, 608
- Derozio. H. L. V., 543
- Desai, Bhulabhai, 167n, 240, 554, 556, 559
- Descartes, René, 8, 313, 328, 330, 363, 394, 395, 409–12, 585, 590, 591, 600
- Despotism, 369, 375, 382
- Determinism 358n, 515, 573, 575, 606, 610
- Deva, Narendra, 187n, 276
- Devi, Nilima, 547n, 563n
- Devi, Shanti, 487, 488
- Diderot, D., 346, 358n, 486
- Dirac, Paul, 7, 16, 568, 588, 604
- Draper, J. W., 6, 365, 382n, 388n, 397n

Driesch, Hans, 492, 498, 507n
Dualism, 332, 492, 585, 602
Dutt, R. Palme, 430

Eddington, A., 7, 567, 588, 590, 604, 605
Egoism, 354, 421, 438
Enistein, Albert, 7, 9, 10, 12, 16, 17, 20n, 452, 568, 579, 588, 590, 595, 596, 598
Empire, (see Imperialism)
  Arabic, 395, 400
  British, 124, 127, 134, 155, 156, 547
  Byzantine, 367, 368, 373, 382
  Indian, 382
  Manchu, 30
  Mughal, 118, 203
  Persian, 368, 370, 382
  Roman, 368, 369, 382, 390
  Saracen, 373, 380
Empiricism, 340, 578, 580, 609, 621
Empirio-criticism, 314
Encyclopedists, French, 346
Engels, Friedrich, 10, 97, 139, 236n, 243n, 260n, 353–6, 358n, 414, 421, 543, 569
Epicurus/Epicureanism, 8, 334, 335, 406, 411, 426
Ercoli (Togliatti, P.), 59n
Erulkar, A. S. 5, 19n
Euclid, 392
Eudin, Xenia J., 19n, 28, 65n
Eugene, Chen, 60

Fa Hien, 341
Fanaticism, 367, 369, 379, 390, 392, 400, 430
Fanon, Frantz, 511
Faragius, Abul, 390
Farben, I. G., 449
Fascism/Fascist, 15, 16, 20n, 108, 171–3, 218, 231–3, 248, 250n, 259, 261n, 314, 429–38, 440, 443–6, 451, 452, 455, 456, 458, 543
Fatalism, 67, 145, 419, 514, 515, 536, 537
Feda, Abul, 374n
Feng Chongyi, 27
Feng Yu-hsiang, 26, 49, 60, 66–8, 72, 87
Fetishism, 417, 418
Feuchtwanger, Lion, 12, 13, 440
Feudalism, 34, 38, 45, 51, 53, 54, 57, 58, 101, 105, 133, 135, 202, 230, 239, 252
Feuerbach, L. A., 6, 8, 346, 353–5, 414, 421, 569, 570
Fischer, Ruth, 543
Fourier, 348
Fragments of a Prisoner's Diary, 461, 485, 511, 541
Franco, Francisco, 15
Frazer, G., 523, 543
Frederic, Barbarossa, 384, 394
Freud, S./Freudian, 316, 479, 501, 543
Fromm, Erich, 20n, 430
Future of Indian Politics, The, 1, 147n

Galen (V. K. Bluecher), 53, 71, 75n, 77
Galen, 390, 392
Galileo, Galilei, 328, 396, 409, 594, 595
Gandhi, M. K., 16, 126, 151, 152, 154–6, 158, 159, 162, 166, 167n, 179, 181, 185, 195–7, 212, 215, 217, 219, 222–5, 227, 228, 231, 241, 263, 274, 275, 277, 279, 287n, 289, 293n, 314, 416, 420, 542, 545, 548, 563n, 635n
Gandhism, 124, 126, 129, 182, 195–7, 212, 213, 215, 216, 218, 222, 224, 225, 227, 228, 231, 235, 251, 254, 264, 315, 436, 485
Ganguli, Dharitri, 194
Ganguli, Dwarakanath, 542
Ganguli, Kshiti, 194
Gegen den Strom, 2, 3, 15
Geissler, Louise, 5, 19n
Gentile, Giovanni, 429, 431–3
George Hsu, 60
Gibbon, Edward, 6, 364, 366, 370, 374n, 380, 382, 391, 397n
Girni Kamgar Union, 184, 188n, 261n
Girondism (Chinese), 38, 44
Gita, The Bhagavad, 315, 324, 432, 437, 465, 485, 491, 515
Goebbles, 439, 453, 457
Goethe, J. W. von, 357, 611
Gottschalk (Roy), Ellen, 5–9, 11–4, 18, 19, 25, 91, 92, 153, 314, 319, 363, 461, 511, 541, 563n, 567, 568, 627
Gradualism, 233, 234, 282

Gramsci, Antonio, 10, 20n, 260n
Great Depression, 14, 15

Haeckel, Ernst, 349–51, 358n, 611–5
    Bathebius Haekelli, 614, 615
Haithcox, J. P., 261n, 274, 276
Haldane, J. B., 7, 568, 580
Hashemite, 376, 378
Havell, E. B., 319, 345, 399, 401
Hegel, G. W. F./Hegelian, Neo-Hegelian, 97, 314, 331, 353, 354, 414, 421, 422, 432, 591
Heiden, Konard, 20n, 236n, 430, 447
Heisenberg, Werner, 7, 16, 152, 568, 590, 598
Helvetius, C. A., 347, 348
Hemingway, E., 13
Hinduism, 314, 414, 419, 435, 474, 501, 545, 546, 548, 551
Hindusthan Association of Central Europe, 92
Hippocrates, 390, 392
Historical Role of Islam, 8, 314, 363
Hitler, Adolf, 14, 20n, 171, 219, 236n, 430, 438–40, 444, 447–51, 453, 455, 469, 555
Hitlerism, 436, 439, 443
Hiuen Tsang, 319, 344
Hoover Institute, 19n, 28, 86n
Hossain, Begum Rokeya, 542
Humanism, 421, 423, 425, 431, 549
Humboldt, Alexander von, 389, 397n
Hume, D., 314
Hussain, Ghulam, 364
Huxley, Thomas, 350, 568, 580, 581, 587, 612–4
Hyde, 501
Hypnosis, Auto-hypnosis, Self-hypnosis, 489, 490, 493–7, 499, 501, 503

I Accuse, 4
Ideal of Indian Womanhood, The, 316, 486, 511, 541, 543
Idealism, 5, 48, 144, 145, 268, 315, 319, 338, 341, 353, 355, 414, 444, 470, 485, 492, 572, 578, 589, 591, 595, 597, 619
Imperialism/Imperialist, 30, 31, 33–5, 37–41, 43–5, 47, 53, 54, 57, 61, 87, 96, 108, 110, 111, 113, 115–34, 137, 138, 157, 160, 165, 166, 181, 197, 198, 200–10, 213–23, 225–30, 232, 234, 235, 238, 240, 246–9, 255, 259, 263, 264, 267, 280, 282, 283, 285, 290, 292, 308, 309, 366, 436, 451, 455, 629–31, 634
    British, 40 130, 131, 202, 206, 309
    Foreign, 32–4, 38, 40, 43, 53, 135, 139, 158, 181, 202, 226, 228, 250, 266
    German, 435, 443
    Neo-German, 450
    Japanese, 33
    International, 49, 64, 65
Anti-imperialist, 33, 34, 37, 40–5, 47–51, 55, 57, 63, 68, 74, 131, 155, 157, 163, 172, 178, 182, 183, 185, 194–6, 198, 199, 201, 203–5, 207, 209, 212–7, 220, 232, 235, 242, 245, 246, 251, 254–6, 260n, 261n, 271, 282–4, 286, 295, 298, 308, 630, 632
Independent India, 29, 485
Independent Labour Party, 281
India in Transition, 1, 147n, 242n, 273
India's Message, 315, 485, 486, 511
India's Problem and its Solution, 1
Indian Constitution, An, 16, 167n
Indian Renaissance, 481, 485, 542, 543
Indian Renaissance Association/Institute, 11, 18, 461, 485
Institute of Marxism-Lenism in Mosow, 27
Institute of Social Research of Frankfurt, 11
Intelligence Bureau, 3, 91, 94, 186n, 193, 194, 273, 274
International Press Correspondence (Inprecor/Inprekor), 2, 19n, 75n, 91, 172, 173
Internationale Nachrichten der Kommunistichen Opposition (INKOPP), 2, 3
Internationalen Verbundeten der Opposition in der KPdSU, Die, 2

Jacobins (Chinese)/Jacobinism, 38, 40, 44–6n, 53, 175, 180, 187n, 252
Jail, (M. N. Roy's life in)
    Allahabad District, 4

  - Almorah District, 4, 9, 13, 314, 461, 568
  - Bareilly Central, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 91, 152, 153, 313, 314, 363, 461, 462, 567
  - Dehradun District, 4, 13, 315, 461, 462, 541, 570
  - Kanpur (Cawnpore) District, 4, 6, 8, 13, 91, 313
- Javali, 324
- Jeans, James, 7, 567, 588, 590
- Jesus Christ, 384, 386, 394, 419
- Jinnah, M. A., 219, 363
- Joffe, Adolf Abramovich, 36n
- Joshi, Narayan Malhar, 281, 288n
- Joshi, Laxman Shastri, 319, 321
- Jung, C. G., 316

- Kabadi, Sundar, 92
- Kanada, 8, 326–9, 340, 341
- Kandalkar, G. L., 93
- Kang Yu-wei, 34, 36n
- Kant, I./Kantian, 9, 314, 413, 424, 578, 581
- Kapila, 324–7, 329–33, 335, 340–2
- Kara, Maniben, 92, 94, 95, 194, 273, 636n
- Karnik, V. B., 20n, 25, 26, 92, 94, 187n, 194, 261n, 636n
- Kautilya, 343
- Kepler, Johannes, 395, 409
- Khilafat Movement, 364
- Kishan Congress, 633
- *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia i Kommunisticheskii International*, 2, 28, 75n
- Kollontai, Alexandra, 543
- *Koran, The*, 364, 369, 372, 379, 380, 386, 388, 399, 400
- Koreish, 376–8
- Korsch, Karl, 570
- Kripalani, J. B., 627
- Krishna, 476, 491, 501
- Krishna Misra, 324
- Kshatriya, 339, 343, 344, 419, 439
- Kuo Min Tang, 27, 28, 32, 34–46n, 50, 51, 53–5, 57–61, 63, 65n, 67–71, 73–5n, 77–9n

- *La Voz de la India*, 1
- Lamarck, 349, 350, 611, 612, 614, 616
- Landlordism, 105, 106, 128, 133, 134, 157, 214, 230, 239, 245, 635n
- Lange, F. A., 6, 319, 388n
- Lassalle, Ferdinand, 236n
- Lavoisier, 348
- League of Indian Independence, 93, 193
- Leckey, 6
- Leibnitz, G. W., 583, 601
- Lenin (Vladimir Iliitch Ulianov), 37, 46n, 47, 50–2n, 58, 171, 180, 184, 187n, 188n, 236n, 242n, 243n, 259, 358n, 569, 570
- *Lessons of the Lahore Congress, The*, 92
- *Letters from Jail*, 5, 10, 19n, 20n, 91, 314, 462, 485, 511
- Li Ang, 86n
- Li Chei-Sun, 82
- Li Li-San, 59n, 74n
- Liang Ch'i-Chao, 36n
- Liao Chung-K'ai, 42n, 46n
- Liao Chung-hai, 45, 46n
- Liberal Federation, 156, 281
- Liberalism, 33, 158, 400, 420, 433, 448
- Library of Alexandria, 390, 391, 452
- Lin Piao, 79n
- Locarno Pact, 448
- Locke, John, 313, 347
- Lohani, Ghulam Ambia Khan, 364
- "Lokhitwadi" (G. H. Deshmukh), 563n
- Lominadze, Besso, 52n, 79n
- Lorentz, H., 596
- Lukacs, Georg, 570
- Luxemburg, Rosa, 188n, 543

- Mach, 595, 603
- Magnus, Albertus, 396
- *Mahabharata*, 324, 339, 344, 419, 516
- Mahavir, 340
- Malik Verlag, 7, 11, 20n
- Manchu, 15, 32, 33, 60
- Mann, Heinrich, 12, 13
- Mann, Thomas, 12, 452
- Manu, 343, 344, 485, 531, 547, 548, 551–4
- Mao Tse-Tung, 29, 79n, 86n
- Marx, Karl, 10, 97, 138, 147, 236n, 260n, 353–6, 358n, 414, 421, 485, 543, 569

Marxism, 7–9, 16, 85, 96, 181, 188n, 195, 243n, 256, 260n, 274, 364, 405, 406, 422, 424, 426, 436, 454, 512, 543, 569, 570
Masani, M. R., 273, 274, 276
Mascarenhas, Charles, 92, 194, 273
Masses, The, 93–5
Materialism, 6–8, 31, 144–6, 313, 314, 319, 321, 323–7, 329, 330, 332, 334, 337, 338, 342, 344, 346, 348, 355, 358, 386, 405, 406, 413, 414, 419, 432–6, 439, 485, 492, 567, 568, 570, 572, 580, 591, 596
Maxwell, J. C., 568, 594, 604
Maya, Mayavad, 342, 492
Mecca, 376–8
Mechanism, 478, 495, 501, 576, 605
Mediaevalism, 226, 231, 320
Mehring, Franz, 435
Memoirs (M. N. Roy's), 1, 19n, 20n, 242n, 260n, 462
Men I Met, 29
Militarism, 34, 38, 64, 84, 87, 371, 424, 444
Mill, John Stuart, 543
Mitra, J. N., 93, 94, 188n
Mohammad, 363, 365, 366, 368, 369, 371, 372, 375–8, 380, 382–8, 393, 394, 400, 419
Mohammedans (Mohammedism), 364, 366, 381, 382, 386, 391, 394, 397, 399, 400
Monasticism, 368, 369, 381, 399
Monism, 144, 326, 333, 492, 601
Monotheism, 368, 372, 376, 386, 387, 393, 414, 418, 419
Morgan, Lewis, 97
Moses, 383, 384, 386, 394
Mukherji, Rajani, 94, 194, 273
Mussolini, Benito, 14, 219, 236n, 429, 430, 438, 445, 455, 456, 555 (also see Fascist, Fascism)
My Experience in China, 25, 26, 29, 75n, 88n
Mysticism, 314, 315, 320, 373, 377, 405, 485, 585–7, 589, 591, 599, 600

Nanchang, 76, 77, 80, 86n
Nanking, 31, 60, 66, 69, 74, 76–8, 87
Narayan, Jayprakash, 273, 274, 276
Narodniks, 243n
National Jingosim, 441, 442
Nationalism, 34, 228, 229, 231, 248, 259, 364, 407, 434, 439, 443, 469, 474, 481, 482, 485
  Bourgeois, 34, 165
National Socialism/Nazism, 7, 14, 15, 20n, 147n, 152, 171, 173, 236n, 250n, 279, 429, 430, 438, 440, 442–4, 446–50, 452–5, 457, 458, 543, 555
National Socialist Party, 14
National Trade Union Federation (NTUF), 187n, 631, 636n
National University of Peking, 34
Nehru, Jawaharlal, 4, 5, 19n, 275, 277, 287n, 288n, 627, 635, 636n
Nehru, Motilal, 288n
Nehru Report, 363
Neo-Constitutionalism, 155, 159, 162, 163, 166
Neo-Kantianism, 314
Neumann, Heinz, 52n, 86n
New Economic Policy, 180, 187n
New Humanism, 406, 567
Newton, Isaac, 8, 328, 331, 413, 583, 592, 595, 596, 598, 607
Nietzsche, F., 433–8
Nihilism, 324, 335, 337, 414
Nirvana, 337, 338
Nishkam Karma, 515
Non-Cooperation Movement, 125, 162
North Expedition (China), 53, 54, 64, 66, 67, 75n
North, Robert C., 19n, 36n, 65n, 86n
Nyaya Systems, 331, 334, 335, 341
Nyaya-Vaisheshika, 335

Old Guard, 15, 37, 38, 40, 77
Omar, Khalif, 370, 371, 379, 386, 391
Opportunism, 49, 55, 57, 58, 67, 70, 71, 77, 81
Organism, 97, 98, 115, 328, 337, 349–51, 357, 406, 412, 465, 478, 491, 522, 573, 580, 581, 613–8
Our Task in India, 91, 93, 188n, 193, 194, 301n, 635n

Panini, 8
Pantheism, 326, 341, 342, 470, 492
Papen, Von, 453
Parliamentarism, 136, 218, 629
Pasteur, L., 616
Patel, Vittalbhai J., 167n
Patriotism, 187n, 202, 206, 213, 382, 441
Pavlov, Ivan P., 316
Peking, 35, 36n, 49, 64, 66
Pessimism, 164, 339, 340, 434
"Philosophical Consequence of Modern Science, The", 9, 17, 315, 321, 462, 485, 541
Pierce, Charles, 589
Pillai, A. K., 273, 274
Planck, Max, 7, 16, 568
Plato, 392, 409, 424, 466, 591
Plekhanov, Georgi, 242n, 243n, 260n, 569
Political Letters, 1
Positivism, 578
Pragmatism, 314
Prison Manuscripts, 13, 17, 18, 313, 319, 363, 405, 429, 461, 485, 511, 541, 567, 569
Proletarian, 31, 41, 49, 78, 86n, 129, 135, 143, 145, 146, 177, 178, 180, 182, 186, 231, 242n, 249, 251, 253, 259–61n, 284
Proletarian Dictatorship, 83, 186, 253, 254, 267
    Semi, 229, 231, 249, 250, 259
Proletariat, 29, 31, 34, 35, 37, 38, 41, 47–9, 55, 57, 58, 61, 63, 65, 81, 84–7, 103, 104, 106, 109, 112, 116, 117, 124–7, 129–32, 135, 142, 144, 145, 178–81, 184, 185, 188n, 193, 229, 230, 235, 238–40, 242, 244, 249, 251, 253, 255, 257–60, 265, 267, 268, 284, 285, 449
Proletariat, Chinese, 85
    Indian, 146, 177, 181, 183, 257
    International, 48, 131
    Parisian, 48, 252
    Shanghai, 41
Ptolemy, 382, 392

Quantum Physics, 358n, 604
Quantum Theory, 153, 568, 594, 598, 600, 602, 604, 608

Radhakrishnan, S., 549
Radical Humanism, 8, 406, 570
Radicalism, 13, 36n, 45, 60, 72, 74, 78, 163, 187n, 406, 511–3, 544
Rai, Lala Lajpat, 281, 287n
Ramachandra, 476, 532
Ramakrishna Paramhamsa, 435, 496, 499, 500
Raman, C. V., 407
Ramayana, 324, 468
Rationalism, 314, 326, 330, 332, 363, 364, 380, 386, 389, 396, 433, 495, 572
Reason, Romanticism and Revolution, 1, 8, 17, 316, 567
Red Army, 31, 83–5
Reddy, 462
Reformism, 129, 233, 234, 281–3
Reichenbach, Hans, 7, 17, 20n, 578, 580, 584
Reichstag, 236n, 430
Renan, E., 7, 388n
Revivalism, 320, 434, 489
Revolution, Agrarian, 28, 29, 45, 54, 55, 58, 61, 65n, 69, 87, 96, 129, 130, 246, 268
    Bourgeois, 101, 105, 106, 128, 129, 137–9, 142, 143, 180, 23842n, 252, 253, 257, 258, 267, 295, 374
    Bourgeois Democratic, 135, 136, 181, 187n, 195, 202, 207, 249, 252, 260n, 291, 292
    Chinese, 24, 25, 28, 32, 42, 45, 55, 65n
    Democratic, 33, 34, 38, 43, 53, 57, 61, 64, 65, 78, 126, 147, 175, 186, 230, 235, 245, 248, 249, 255–8, 266, 277, 286, 291, 630
    French, 45, 46n, 187n
    Indian, 177, 178, 186, 213, 220, 240, 251, 253, 257, 285, 292
    Industrial, 117
    National, 31, 41, 55, 63, 73, 75n, 78, 126, 127, 129, 130, 134, 135, 194, 206, 245, 278, 285, 442, 443, 447, 628
    National Democratic, 30, 35, 37, 55,

    57, 58, 62, 72, 73, 77, 78, 81, 125, 127–30, 134, 159, 166, 181, 231, 232, 235, 249, 259, 266, 277, 278, 282–6, 294, 296, 303
  Philosophical, 407, 411, 413, 414
  Proletarian, 85, 106, 108, 127, 135, 137, 142, 241, 253, 256, 257, 300
  Proletarian Socialist, 135
  Russian, 48, 58
  Socialist, 106, 127, 136
Revolution and Counter-revolution in China, 1, 2, 25, 34, 88n
Revolutionary Party of the Indian Working Class (RPIWC), 93, 95, 96, 193, 194, 236n, 237n, 281n
Round Table Conference, 151, 154, 167n, 185, 223, 309n
Round Table Conference, Second, 16, 155, 223
Roy Defence Committee, 4
Roy, M. N., 1–6, 8, 10–9, 20n, 25–9, 46n, 50–2n, 56, 58, 59n, 63, 65n, 67–75n, 77, 81, 91–6, 147n, 152, 167n, 173, 174, 187n, 188n, 193–5, 211n, 236n, 242n, 243n, 250n, 260n, 261n, 271, 273–6, 287n, 301n, 313–6, 319, 363–5, 405, 406, 429, 430, 461, 462, 485, 486, 511–13, 541–4, 563n, 567–9, 627, 628, 632, 635n, 636n
M. N. Roy Archives, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, 5, 18, 93, 96, 174, 194, 273, 313, 636n
M. N. Roy: Philosopher Revolutionary, 19n, 25
Roy, Rammohun, 542, 543, 563n
Royal Commission on Indian Labour, 121, 288n
Ruikar, R. S., 93, 273
Rusch, Thomas A., 273, 274, 276, 301n
Russell, Bertrand, 7, 228n, 568, 586, 587, 595, 596
Rutherford, Ernest, 567, 604
Ryazanov, D., 569

Samadhi, 488, 490, 493
Sanatan Dharma, 314, 315, 485
Sankaracharya, 313, 326, 336–9, 341, 342, 356, 419, 492
Sankhya, 8, 313, 322, 324, 326, 329–36, 363
Sanger, Margaret, 545, 563n
Sarkar, Mukund Lal, 93, 188n
Sarkar, Saralabala, 1, 19n
Sastri, Sivanath, 542
Satyagraha, 151, 167n, 228n
Satyamurthy, S., 219
Scepticism, 320, 364, 393–5, 400, 489, 499
Science and Philosophy, 405, 485, 567–70
Science and Superstition, 485
Schopenhauer, A., 433–6
Schroedinger, Erwin, 7, 16, 20n, 568, 606, 607
Scholasticism, 341, 390
Selected Works of M. N. Roy, 1–4, 11, 15, 19n, 20n, 29, 52n, 56n, 74n, 92, 93, 147n, 188n, 242n, 364, 430
Sellers, Roy W., 7, 17, 568
Sen, Keshab Chandra, 542
Seneca, 409
Sengupta, Naresh Chandra, 512
Shaikh, Tyab Ali, 91–4, 96, 174, 188n, 193, 194, 364
Shanghai, 35, 40, 41, 55, 63–7, 74, 82, 85, 87
Shetty, A. N., 92, 194
Shetty, M. R. 92, 194, 273
Shudras, 370, 401, 472
Siddiqui, Mohammad Shafiq, 364
Simon Commission, 264, 277, 288n
Singh, Brajesh, 92
Sita, 532, 556
Sitaramayya, B. P., 20n, 147n, 151, 152, 167n, 221n, 228n, 287n, 293n
Social Democrats, 14, 171, 172–4, 236n
Social Democratic Party, 282, 443, 444
Socialism, 136, 137, 157, 180, 187n, 224, 229–36n, 249, 251, 254, 256–8, 266–8, 275, 278–87n, 290, 291, 294–7, 429, 440–4, 447, 454, 629, 632
Socrates, 423
Soddy, 7, 568, 593
Soviet Republic (Union), 15, 31, 35, 36n, 38, 46, 48, 51, 53, 65, 78, 82–6, 171, 448, 450, 462, 543, 568
Spengler, O., 439
Spinoza, Baruch, 6, 313, 331

Spritualism, 8, 129, 314, 315, 346, 355, 408, 433, 439, 485, 505, 515, 572
Spratt, Philip, 567
Stalin, Joseph, 15, 52n, 55, 59n, 65n, 74n, 79n, 86n, 171, 172, 543
Stein, Gertude, 9, 461
Suleiman, Shah Mohammad, 10, 405
Sun Yat-Sen, 29, 30, 32–6n, 38, 42n, 46, 53, 60, 72, 73
Sutras, 319, 326, 328, 330, 332–4, 336, 342
Swabhavavadins, 323
Swaraj Party, 152, 154, 155, 157–9, 164, 187n, 223, 228n, 287n
Swastika, 429, 441, 444, 453
Syndicalism, 445

Tagore, Rabindranath, 466, 478, 512, 542, 563n
Taiping Revolt, 30, 33
Tamerlane, 369
Tan Ping-Shah, 62n, 69, 70
Tang Shen-Chi, 26, 27, 60, 61, 64, 66, 68–70, 72–4, 76, 77
Taylor, 7
Thalheimer, August, 2, 6, 8, 11, 568, 569
Theory of Relativity, 9, 10, 16, 568, 593–9, 602–4
Theory of Uncertainty, 315, 568
Thyssen, 443, 449
Totalitarian, 320, 430
Trade Unions, 70, 71, 82, 94, 178, 184, 236n, 262, 631, 633, 636n
  Red, 93, 173, 178, 184, 187n, 188n, 636n
Trade Union Federation, 178, 184
Treaty of Versailles, 15, 33, 34, 441, 442, 448
Trent, Evelyn, 5, 19n
Trotsky, 46n, 55, 171
T'sai Ho-Shen, 42n, 74n, 75n

Unified Field Theory, 7, 17, 568
Unitarianism, 377, 394
United Front, 15, 171–3, 186n, 260n, 430
Upanishads, 322, 323, 325, 326, 334, 335, 434, 435
  Katha, 325
  Svetasvatara, 325

Vaisheshika Systems, 8, 322, 324, 326–31, 335–7, 341
Vedas/Vedic/Vedanta, 322–4, 326, 329, 334, 335, 340–3, 352, 419, 439
Vidyasagar, Iswarchandra, 542, 563n
Vijnana Bhikshu, 330
Vitalism, 314, 492, 570, 611
Vivekananda, 417, 435, 489, 498
Volksrecht, Das, 2, 3
Voltaire, 384, 385, 413, 486, 512

Wang Chin-Wei, 26, 27, 46, 60, 63, 65n, 72–5n, 78
Wang Ming, 172, 174
Weber, Max, 8
Weimar Constitution, 430
Weimar Republic, 14, 147n, 236n
White Paper on India, The British, 16, 155, 156, 163, 167n, 210n, 219, 309n
Whitehead, A. N., 7, 568, 584
Whitley Commission, 292
Williamson, Horace, 19n, 91, 94, 173, 186n, 273–6
Wittfogel, Karl, 20n
Wollstonecraft, Mary, 543
Woo, T. C., 39n, 42n
Woolf, Virginia, 544
Wuhan Govt. (Wuhan Group), 2, 27, 59–62, 64, 66–70, 78

Xiangdao Zhoubao, 27

Yen Hsi-Shan, 29, 87
Yuan Shih-Kai, 32, 33
Yeh T'ing, 79n, 86n

Zoroaster/Zarathrustra, 368, 382, 444
Zetkin, Clara, 543
Zhang Guangyu, 27, 28, 59n
Zola, E., 13

Sibnarayan Ray (editor) was a colleague of M.N.Roy in his later years. Currently Research Director of the Indian Renaissance Institute, Calcutta, Professor Ray has taught at the Universities of Bombay and California, and was Chairman of Indian Studies at the University of Melbourne. He was Director, Rabindra Bhavan, Visva-Bharati University. The author of over twenty books, he has edited *Jijnasa*, a quarterly of ideas, since 1980.

Rs 495

FROM REVIEWS OF EARLIER VOLUMES

'Editing the writings of a prolific writer like M. N. Roy is an extremely difficult task. Sibnarayan Ray has executed this with a scholarly erudition which others may envy but dare not emulate.'
Ravinder Kumar, Sunday Observer

'One of the major publishing ventures of this decade. No library can afford not to have these. Professor Ray has done a model job of editing the volume, and providing copious references and introductions, but never intruding between the reader and the text.' Professor R. Srinivasan, Bombay University

'It is not easy to think of a source book which compares with this ...A work of immense value.'
Ananda Bazar Patrika

ISBN 0195637682
9 780195 637687

Ray

SELECTED
WORKS OF
M.N. ROY

VOLUME IV
1932–1936

OXFORD